Commentary

VOLUME NINETY-THREE • NUMBER FIVE • MAY 1992

Is America on the Way Down?

(Round Two)

Peter L. Berger • Francis Fukuyama • George Gilder
Harvey C. Mansfield, Jr. • Joseph S. Nye, Jr.
Paul Craig Roberts • Irwin M. Stelzer
Jude Wanniski • Ben J. Wattenberg

Buchanan and the Conservative Crackup
Norman Podhoretz

In Memoriam: Lucy S. Dawidowicz
Neal Kozodoy

1492 and All That
Richard Ryan

"The People's Poet"
Joseph Epstein

A Purim Homily
Ruth R. Wisse

Books in Review: Joseph Adelson / Edward Alexander / Terry Teachout / Kenneth Silber / Rita Kramer

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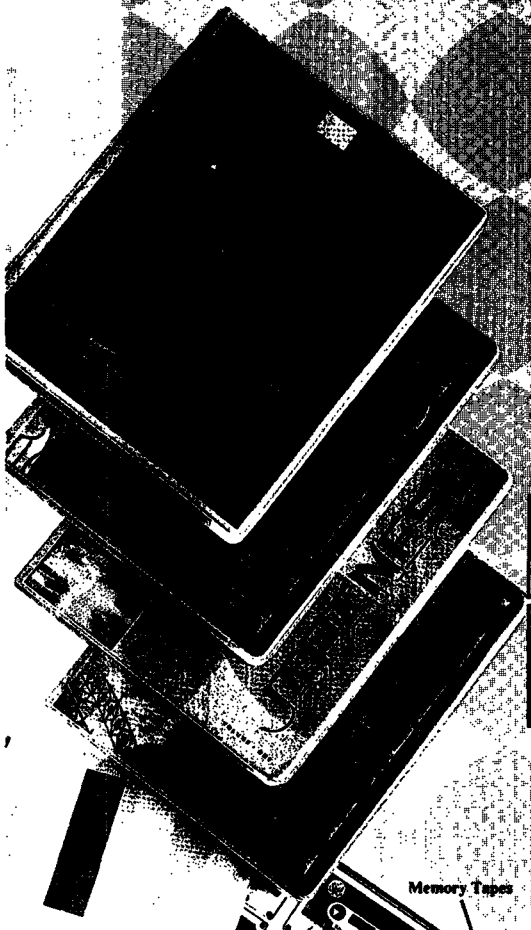

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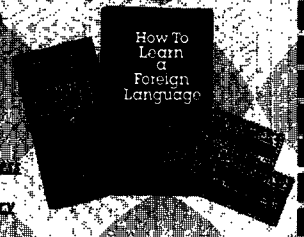

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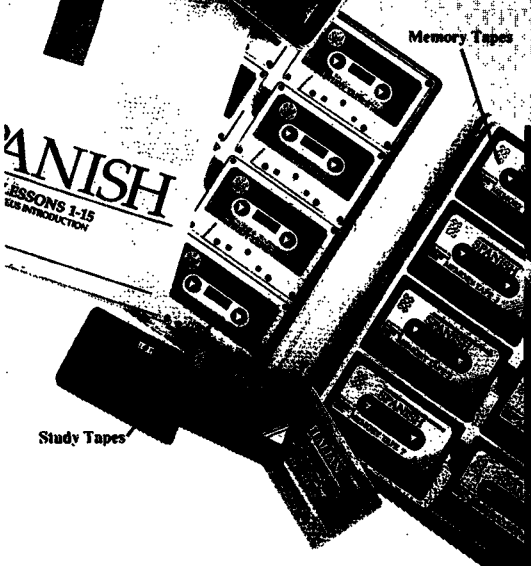

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Letters from Readers

America and Israel

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In "America and Israel: An Ominous Change" [January], Norman Podhoretz—intelligent and eloquent as he is—just has it wrong. Far from a Palestinian state being completely antithetical to the interests of the United States, as he argues, such a state would be to the United States' benefit.

What Mr. Podhoretz overlooks in his article is the radicalization—in the direction of Islamic fundamentalism—that the Arab-Israeli conflict engenders at this time among Muslims. Islam is not a religion in the Western sense, to a great extent separate from public and political life; Islam is a quasi-political state religion. Because, further, opposition to Israel has become strongly tied during recent years to support for Islamic fundamentalism, continued support for Israel that does not lead to a resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict will result in more such radicalization of the Arab world, as is occurring right now in Algeria.

Attempting to remove religion from the Arab-Israeli conflict, as Mr. Podhoretz does for the most part in his article—seeing things predominantly in political or nationalist terms rather than religious ones—is like taking hydrogen out of water: the original substance disappears. The Arab-Israeli conflict is firstly and overwhelmingly a religious one.

This is not to say there are no political or nationalist conflicts in the Middle East; there are, as Mr. Podhoretz points out. But the Arab-Israeli conflict is not primarily one of these, and this is why it has proved so long-lasting and intractable.

Support for a Palestinian state is in the United States' interest because the only way the Arab-Israeli conflict will be resolved, from the Arabs' perspective, is by this (and not by a Palestinian state of Jordan). And the longer the Arab-Israeli conflict remains unresolved, the more radical—in an Islamic sense—the Arab world potentially becomes.

Islamic fundamentalism is a non-Western and anti-modern force on the world scene. Islamic fundamentalism combined with nuclear weapons is a prospect worthy of the most profound consideration. There is no question that it is not in Israel's immediate interest to leave Judea, Samaria, and Gaza. But this does not mean that such a withdrawal is not in the interest of the United States and of the world.

Israel, to be sure, is in an extremely precarious position. How this position came to be, and its relative rights and wrongs, is not the question here. It is, rather, what is to the benefit of the United States? Continuing to assist Israel in its expansionist policies—for these are, rightly or wrongly, truly what they are—is harmful. If Israel wants to go this road alone, then so be it, but this should not be with the help or by the sustenance of the United States government. If there is one thing the Gulf War showed, further, it is that the United States will defend an ally which is threatened with annihilation.

Finally, Mr. Podhoretz's listing at the end of his article of the reasons for the considerable sympathy Israel has in this country is inaccurate: "It is a sympathy based on a sense of cultural and political kinship, shared values, and common interests. . . ." The absolutely fundamental reason for sympathy for Israel in this country . . . is that six million Jews were murdered during World War II. This was perhaps the greatest crime ever committed. But it does not give Israel forever the right to reign over Judea, Samaria, and Gaza, where the majority of inhabitants reject its rule. A Palestinian state in these areas, though with great potential dangers for Israel, is—in the final analysis—even Israel's own best hope.

ALAN O. EBENSTEIN
Santa Barbara, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

It is true that George Bush's position toward Israel is shaping up into one that is considerably less conciliatory than that of many of his predecessors. But is it possible that this has something to do with the "irrationality" of Israel's "in-your-face" settlement policy rather than the "irrationality" of the American President? The settlements do nothing to enhance Israel's security; they distract attention from Israel's very real security

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concerns and make them seem trivial and disingenuous. And they are clearly meant to antagonize, for they suggest that Israel seeks to impose a unilateral solution rather than seeking an accommodation with its neighbors.

The linkage that Yitzhak Shamir has created between the settlements and the Russian immigration has put American Jews (and the administration) in an impossible situation. Those of us who eagerly desire to support Israel's efforts to integrate its new citizens find that by doing so we must also support West Bank settlements. Shamir is not only squandering his country's scarce resources at this crucial time, he is treating all those who are in a position to help with supreme contempt. This is not only morally indefensible, it is absolutely irrational.

It is always amusing to see Mr. Podhoretz, a frighteningly effective propagandist for Jewish hawkishness, rail about the evils of the ubiquitous Arab propaganda machine. To define the Arab-Israeli conflict exclusively as a Jewish-Palestinian affair, as the Arabs tend to do, is certainly inaccurate. But to define the conflict exclusively as one of the Arab world against Israel, as Mr. Podhoretz does, is no less so. The fact of the matter is that the Arab-Israeli conflict is both. It began as a civil war between two communities contesting the same land. When Israel declared its independence in 1948, it evolved into a war between sovereign states. The next three wars were similar in nature. But beginning with the occupation of Arab lands in 1967 (admittedly brought about by Arab aggression), and through the Lebanon war and the *intifada*, there can be no doubt that the Palestinians have re-emerged as a political entity with a bona-fide national identity, Arab propaganda notwithstanding. In other words, the Arab-Israeli conflict has reverted back, to a large extent, to its original "communal" nature. To deny this, as Mr. Podhoretz continues to do, is not only baseless propaganda; it reveals embarrassingly outdated thinking.

If Arab propaganda is insidious, then so is Jewish propaganda—both seek to manipulate minds by distorting the truth. I suggest that the politics of delegitimization, as practiced by Mr. Podhoretz and his Arab counterparts, does not bring them honor and only serves to perpetuate hatred, fear, and ignorance.

Why is there "still a great deal of sympathy for Israel in this country," as Mr. Podhoretz says, if Arab propaganda is so effective? He suggests this has something to do with a perception of "shared values." Actually, I happen to agree, but it is also interesting to note that there is no longer any mention of Israel as a "strategic asset" now that the Soviet Union has evaporated. I suspect that the "strategic-asset" argument in favor of U.S. support for Israel always held greater charm for Mr. Podhoretz than the "shared-values" one. Now that he is forced to rely solely on the latter, he might want to consider how an Israel that is becoming increasingly undemocratic due to the occupation will continue to impress the American people as a nation with similar values. The status quo in the territories does not bode well for the American public's continued support of Israel.

Finally, it was refreshing to see Mr. Podhoretz acknowledge the real concern that the Israeli Left and its American supporters have regarding the occupation, namely, that they fear "the corrupting effects of the occupation on their democratic culture." What a change from Mr. Podhoretz's customary vilification of those who dare to express a view deviating from what is deemed "politically correct" on matters pertaining to Israel!

TONY FRANK

Evanston, Illinois

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I write to express my admiration (and gratitude) for Norman Podhoretz's latest article on Israel.

Mr. Podhoretz's characterization of the Bush-Baker policies as obsessive and irrational is exactly right. What we are seeing, however, is also the consequence of the end of the cold war, and the end of the supposed utility of Israel for strategic defense against the USSR. The old prejudice of the State Department professionals against Jews and Israel is rising to the surface like a submerged rock as the tide goes down. They have always held that our "permanent" interests are with the Arabs—and the Muslim world generally. I think they are doing a good job in manipulating Bush and Baker.

Another factor in the rising tide of pro-Arab sentiment in the State Department and elsewhere has been the emergence of Hanan Ashrawi as spokesman (or spokeswoman) for the Palestinians on the Jordanian/Palestinian Arab delegation to the Middle East "peace process," which Baker is promoting so assiduously. She is brilliantly articulate (in good American English), and forceful and passionate in ways Americans admire. In a CNN interview with Rowland Evans in January, she bowled over her host with torrential eloquence in behalf of independence and statehood for the Arabs in the West Bank and Gaza. She sounded for all the world like a latter-day Tom Paine or Tom Jefferson.

She referred throughout to the Israeli "occupation" of her native land in terms indistinguishable from the Nazi occupation of Eastern Europe in World War II. One would never have guessed from what she said that the Nazi occupation resulted from Hitler's unprovoked aggression, while the Israeli "occupation" was of land that was formerly part of the Jewish homeland under the League of Nations Mandate and had never belonged to any Arab sovereignty. Nor would one have guessed from anything she said that the West Bank—like the Golan Heights—had been a launching platform in the Arab wars of aggression against Israel.

Instead, Mrs. Ashrawi spoke only of the terrible oppression of an alien regime, and of the denial of the human rights of those living under a government to which they had never given their consent. Mr. Evans asked about the relationship of the delegation headed by Mrs. Ashrawi to the PLO and to Yasir Arafat. No one could fault the candor of the lady's response. The PLO, she said, was the government chosen by the Palestinians themselves, and its only legitimate representative. Neither Israel nor the United States—nor anyone else—had the right to say who represented the Palestinians. Although she did not draw the analogy herself, her answer implied that to ask the world to disregard the PLO in the peace process would be like having asked the world to disregard the Continental Congress in the negotiations for American independence.

She also made it plain that by "Palestinians" she meant those in "exile" as well as those living under the "occupation." During the Gulf War the Palestinians of the

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Middle East Diaspora were fanatical supporters of Saddam Hussein, thereby making them *personae non gratae* virtually everywhere else (except perhaps Iraq?). Since their numbers are estimated at up to six million, it is clear that a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza could not possibly accommodate an ingathering of all its alleged "citizens." That is to say, it could not do so on the ground of the West Bank and Gaza alone. Nor could it do so elsewhere in Palestine, without first expelling all the Jews.

Such considerations made all the more interesting Mr. Evans's next question. Why, he asked, did the PLO not expunge those provisions of its charter calling for the elimination of the Jewish state? Mrs. Ashrawi bridled at the suggestion: why, she asked in turn, should we make such a "concession" without any corresponding concession in return?

One might well ask what the concept of reciprocity can mean in such a case. If "A" demands the right to annihilate "B," and "B" demands the right not to be annihilated, what concession can "B" make in the interests of compromise? What is the middle ground between existence and nonexistence? Let us make no mistake about it: the PLO charter, to which Mrs. Ashrawi pledges allegiance, calls for expunging all traces of the "Zionist entity." It denies any legality—or legitimacy—to any actions, either of the League of Nations, or the United Nations, leading to the establishment of the Jewish homeland or the state of Israel. While Mrs. Ashrawi demands that Israel comply with her interpretation of UN Resolution 228, she denies any legitimacy to the original UN resolution of 1947 recognizing Israel's statehood. Consider these excerpts from the Palestinian National Charter of 1966, as amended in 1968:

> 1. Palestine is the homeland of the Arab Palestinian people; *it is an indivisible part of the Arab homeland*, and the Palestinian people are an integral part of the Arab nation [emphasis added].
>
> 9. Armed struggle is the only way to liberate Palestine. Thus it is the overall strategy, not merely a tactical phase. [Land for peace?]
>
> 15. The liberation of Palestine . . . is a national duty and . . . aims at the elimination of Zionism in Palestine.
>
> 19. The partition of Palestine in 1947 and the establishment of the state of Israel are entirely illegal. [So much for the UN!]
>
> 20. The Balfour Declaration, the [League of Nations] Mandate for Palestine, and everything that has been based upon them, are deemed null and void.
>
> 21. The Arab Palestinian people . . . reject all solutions which are substitutes for the total liberation of Palestine. [Again: land for peace!]
>
> 23. The demands of security and peace, as well as the demands of right and justice, require all states to consider Zionism an illegitimate movement, to outlaw its existence, and to ban its operation.

The American public is constantly bombarded with references to the Israeli "occupation," to Israeli brutality in suppressing the *intifada*, to Israeli intransigence in refusing to trade "land for peace." Americans hear of Israeli insistence that the PLO is a terrorist organization, but they no longer take this very seriously, particularly when the State Department endorses the Arabs' claim to the West Bank and Gaza. After all, were not the resistance movements in Nazi-occupied Europe all terrorists by this same definition? Yet the American public seldom if ever sees the actual charter—or constitution—of the PLO. It is this document to which Mrs. Ashrawi is committed as a loyal citizen of what she regards as the Palestinian Arab state.

It is worth remembering how the peace process between Israel and Egypt began, when it was set in motion by Anwar Sadat in 1977. He flew to Israel, and addressed the Knesset. He said to the Jews of Israel: "I renounce my past." That past included serving as a Nazi agent during World War II, and also included allegiance to the PLO Charter. Sadat did not ask any compensation for this "concession." On the contrary, he recognized it as the necessary prelude to any kind of bargaining, in which concessions would be mutual. Of course, in thus recognizing Israel's right to exist at the outset, he sealed his own death warrant. Mrs. Ashrawi is determined not to make that mistake. . . . In the last year alone, more than 400 Arabs in the West Bank have been murdered by their Arab comrades for fraternizing with Israelis.

How, then, does Secretary of State Baker expect negotiations to proceed, when the strategic goal of the Arabs remains the extinction of Israel, to which all compromises, from necessity, are merely subordinate? How can Israel concede "land" when "peace" is understood by the PLO to mean Israel's extinction? Why does not the Secretary of State—like Anwar Sadat—demand recognition of Israel as the precondition of negotiations? Why does he not demand that the PLO amend its charter—or that the Palestinian delegation be genuinely independent of the PLO? That "independence" is today a farce.

HARRY V. JAFFA
Claremont, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Norman Podhoretz showed his usual perspicacity in assessing the present status of American-Israeli relations.

Israel and its American supporters have been stunned by the contrast between the friendliness of the Reagan administration and the hostility of the Bush-Baker team. This hostility was not so evident in the first two years of the present administration. During the Gulf War and in the period just preceding it, American-Israeli relations seemed almost amicable, for the Bush administration needed Israel's cooperation in holding together the fragile alliance. In addition, there was the belated recognition that without the Begin government's destruction of Iraq's nuclear reactor in 1981, the Gulf invasion might not have been possible. Since the war, however, and the disintegration of Soviet treaties with the Arabs, Israel has become an obstacle . . . to the Bush-Baker goal of maintaining cordial relations with the Arab world, and particularly with Saudi Arabia, which in some ways now dictates American foreign policy in the Middle East. . . .

Instead of an Arab-Israeli negotiation, the situation has now turned into a contest between Israel and the Bush administration, just as the Arabs had hoped. . . .

There can be no denying the immense difficulties in the way of a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict, with its irreconcilable differences, deep-rooted hatreds, and 50 years of warfare. Bush and Baker do deserve some credit (possibly even a future Nobel Peace Prize), since the adversaries are at least talking about talking. Yet even

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while we acknowledge the importance of this diplomatic achievement, it is difficult to understand why the Bush administration has chosen this time to revert to the Eisenhower diplomacy of exerting unnecessary pressure on Israel, the only country in the region that genuinely desires peace. . . .

SAMUEL L. TENNENBAUM
West Orange, New Jersey

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Norman Podhoretz has written in his customary lucid and penetrating style, and I congratulate him on his updated analysis of the change in American policy toward Israel. Unaccountably, however, but perhaps for some inscrutable reason, he has avoided what, to me, has to be one of the crucial forces driving this new policy.

In a family whose chief income was derived from oil, it would not seem unusual for George Bush to be more occupied with this factor than other Presidents. He is acutely aware of U.S. dependence on a cheap and uninterrupted supply of Middle East oil, particularly in a recession that threatens his reelection. He knows the blackmail weapon the Arab cartel can wield by raising prices, arbitrarily if necessary, to force high energy costs on American companies already closing plants and laying off workers. . . . The Palestinians may "never miss an opportunity to miss an opportunity," but their Arab oil backers are not so unsophisticated. They may be welcoming Jews in Riyadh these days, but they also see oil as the key to the conflict—the eventual lever that could split the "special relationship" between Israel and Uncle Sam. It will take a less prejudiced and more far-seeing President than this one to withstand such pressure—to realize that, in the long run, the U.S. has only one real friend over there.

STANLEY P. KESSEL
Hollywood, Florida

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Thank you for "America and Israel: An Ominous Change." To my mind, the irrationality of the Bush administration's hostile attitude toward Israel may have a sinister source. By abusing Israel, the administration appeases Arab countries. . . .

By appeasing the Arabs, large amounts of wealth are enabled to flow in certain directions: business as usual. Maybe that is what beckons the Bush administration, even if it means placing Israel in dire straits.

STEPHEN FISHMAN
Kingston, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Norman Podhoretz's article demonstrates the obsessive nature of the Bush administration's concern with Israel, the hostility of the administration's intentions, and the irrationality vis-à-vis American interests of the administration's goals. It is with this in mind that one can best appreciate the broader significance of a recent action of the administration which was widely viewed as undilutedly pro-Israel.

As we know, in December 1991, the Bush administration engineered, through what was widely acknowledged to be vigorous lobbying, the overwhelming rescission by the United Nations General Assembly of the "Zionism-racism" resolution. While generally viewed as a positive step, this extraordinary effort by the Bush administration can better be understood, in light of the administration's animus toward Israel, as a means of sanitizing the UN itself.

As was seen during the Gulf War, the Bush administration prefers to act under cover of the UN imprimatur rather than unilaterally. As long as the "Zionism-racism" resolution remained on its books, however, the UN could be clearly seen for what it is and was thus disqualified in the eyes of the American public and most other democratic peoples from legitimately playing any role in the resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The essential nature of the UN and its inbred hostility toward Israel was not changed by the rescission vote; as reported in an editorial in the December 28, 1991 issue of the Jerusalem *Post* international edition:

> On the very morning of the repeal, 152 nations, including the United States and the USSR, voted to condemn and annul Israel's "decision to impose its laws in Jerusalem," and bade the countries with embassies in Jerusalem to remove them. Another resolution, sponsored by Oman, Sudan, and Vietnam, call-

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ing on Israel promptly to withdraw from all *Palestinian* territory, recognize the PLO and "all the rights of the Palestinian people," including the right of "return," was passed by a vote of 93 nations [emphasis added].

The rescission, therefore, placed critics of the administration's hostility toward Israel on the defensive and sanitized the UN in the eyes of many, but left that organization just as hostile and thus even more dangerous to Israel than ever. . . .

KENNETH L. GARTNER
Mineola, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Norman Podhoretz's frighteningly insightful article leads me to conclude that President Bush and Secretary of State Baker have little warmth or compassion for Israel. . . . When I look at the friends of this administration (former pals Sununu and Buchanan and current pals Syria and Iran), I am very concerned.

Should Bush and Baker continue to use Israel and American Jews as a scapegoat to shore up falling popularity polls, I trust that COMMENTARY will be in the vanguard, exposing this opportunism.

SHELDON SELLER
Riverton, Connecticut

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Congratulations on Norman Podhoretz's fine article, "America and Israel: An Ominous Change."

As a somewhat eclectic conservative, I agree with all of it, every word, including his indictment of the feckless Bush administration for believing that some sort of settlement of the so-called Palestinian problem will bring peace to the Middle East. What a laugh.

I myself do not see how Israel can give up one inch of territory. As Napoleon somewhere said, strategy is geography. Without the West Bank, Israel is less than twelve miles wide at its waist. Once Iraq had (has?) the bomb, an Iraqi tank thrust through Jordan just might do the trick, but with the buffer of the West Bank, Israeli armor could certainly smash any such tank thrust. (If the other side had nuclear bombs, Israel could not use its nuclear deterrent.) As for giving up the Golan Heights, who is kidding whom? . . .

JEFFREY HART
Hanover, New Hampshire

NORMAN PODHORETZ writes:

It is Alan O. Ebenstein, I fear, who "has it wrong." For insofar as Islamic fundamentalism is a factor in the Arab war against the Jewish state—and I agree with Mr. Ebenstein that it is—it makes a new Palestinian state even less likely to result in a peaceful resolution of the conflict. The reason is that the religiously based hostility to Israel is, if anything, more intransigent and less subject to possible compromise than the politically based opposition. To Islamic fundamentalists, the existence of a sovereign Jewish state, *no matter where its boundaries might be drawn*, is an abomination and a blasphemy. This is why the fundamentalists, unlike the Palestinian nationalists, cannot even pretend to favor trading land for peace or to settle for a two-state solution. In their eyes, the entire area belongs by divine right to Islam. Therefore a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza could not possibly satisfy them; indeed, even if (as an Egyptian journalist once proposed) Israel were limited to one synagogue in Tel Aviv and the ten meters surrounding it, the Islamic fundamentalists would still consider it their religious duty to correct this violation of the divinely ordained natural order. Mr. Ebenstein, admitting that a new Palestinian state in Judea, Samaria, and Gaza would pose "great potential dangers for Israel," nevertheless thinks that it would be in the interest of the United States. Yet his own stress on Islamic fundamentalism belies that dangerous illusion.

If Tony Frank had paid more careful attention to some of my earlier writings, he would not have been so surprised to find me acknowledging that the Israeli Left and its American supporters believe that continued occupation of the territories in question has had and will continue to have a corrupting effect on Israel's democratic culture. I have said as much about the Left many times in the past. But I have also then gone on to express my strong disagreement with this belief. To me it seems obvious that Israel's democratic culture remains alive and well—amazingly so, given the strains of living in a state of siege and considering how other democracies, including our own here in America, have behaved in periods of national emergency.

Incidentally, my version of the "strategic-asset" argument has always rested less on Israel's contribution to the containment of Soviet power than on the value to the United States of a democratic ally in the Middle East; and it still does. Furthermore, I have always been convinced, and I still am, that people like Mr. Frank, who keep insisting that Israel is no longer a true democracy, are helping, in some cases (though not, I hope, in his) deliberately, to undermine the main basis of American support.

This is not to say that I consider the status quo pleasant or desirable. Yet the question must always be: compared to what? Unlike Mr. Ebenstein, Mr. Frank evidently thinks that a new Palestinian state poses no threat to Israel; to assert that it does is "baseless propaganda" and "embarrassingly outdated thinking." Well, I suggest that Mr. Frank take a look at Harry V. Jaffa's letter above, and especially the sections Mr. Jaffa quotes from the Palestinian National Charter. And with regard to the Arab world in general, I suggest that he also ask himself why Syria has been importing Scud-C missiles with the accuracy and the range to hit Israel's cities, and why the "moderate" Saudis are helping them pay for these missiles. Perhaps then he might begin to understand why so many of us—along with a great majority of the Israeli people—are convinced that, short of a change in the Arab world comparable to the one that has occurred in the former Soviet Union, there is no way Israel can withdraw from the territories in favor of a new Palestinian state without placing itself in mortal danger.

I thank the other correspondents for their kind words and their many interesting clarifications and additions. Among these, I am especially struck by Jeffrey Hart's passionate statement. Mr. Hart was Patrick J. Buchanan's campaign chairman in the New Hampshire primary, which only goes to prove (as I suggest elsewhere in this issue) that backing Buchanan does not necessarily imply approval of his hostility to Israel or of his advocacy of a new Palestinian state.

Hill vs. Thomas

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Suzanne Garment's article, "Why Anita Hill Lost" [January], is one more in an endless stream of

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commentaries that skirt the real issue underlying the Clarence Thomas-Anita Hill controversy. I refer to the unspoken issue of whether what Thomas allegedly did, even if true in each and every detail, reflects anything worthy of scrutiny, whether public or private. A man in his early thirties makes a verbal move toward an attractive female—who rejects, but protests not. . . .

It is over such as this that a nation stood transfixed for several weeks. All the actors on the stage—including the accused, even while denying it—condemned the dastardly conduct as beneath contempt and unbefitting one aspiring to such high office. Never mind that the alleged conduct was entirely verbal. Never mind that the so-called victim neither flinched nor protested, but over the years continued to nurture her relationship with her alleged tormentor. Never mind that in rites of passage, such acts as these are as commonplace as there are birds and bees on a summer day. . . . In spite of all this, the matter continues to be much discussed. But what has not been open to debate so far is the simple but honest street phrase that I am sure has occurred to many of us: so what!

I will nevertheless offer up my own opinion. Despite the fact that Hill was by far the more inconsistent, both in her statements during the hearing and in regard to her actions over the years, she captures my vote because of what she did not say, i.e., that Thomas had repeatedly cornered her and submitted her to physical indignities, that he threatened to fire her or reassign her to a less desirable position as punishment for her rejection, etc. Such actions would unquestionably constitute abuse. Had she wanted to invent a story to damage Thomas, surely she would have included in the mix some clearly outrageous and abusive conduct on his part. The very fact that nothing of this sort was included weighs heavily in her favor.

All of which is totally beside the point, the point being that Thomas's actions as depicted amounted to little more than youthful indiscretions. His response to the committee should have been a resounding "it's none of your business." Unfortunately, in the present climate wherein the feminist movement has outlawed mother nature in the workplace, Thomas had but one choice to make out of regard for his good name. In my opinion, his response was both predictable and understandable in human terms, and therefore justifiable.

Mrs. Garment's analysis adds little to the debate. In addition to the litany of inconsistencies in Hill's conduct and testimony previously listed by just about everybody, she underscores the fact that Hill is an ambitious female, which attribute Hill artfully concealed. Again, so what! . . . Did Hill embellish or lie about (1) the extent of her ambitiousness; (2) the extent of the outrage and/or revulsion, if any, that she felt over Thomas's alleged licentiousness; (3) the full and true reasons she remained silent over the years? My guess is that she is probably guilty on all counts, for that is just the way it is with humans when outsiders attempt to pry into their innermost personal motives and conduct.

In short, it is most likely, on balance, that, as the exchange unfolded, both individuals found it necessary to retreat from a strict account of the facts in order to preserve their dignity, good names, and self-respect.

ARTHUR S. BAY
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Suzanne Garment is right on point, but she leaves unanswered the two most pertinent questions raised by observers: (1) Did Clarence Thomas do the things alleged by Anita Hill? In short, which one told the truth? (2) If Hill is to be believed, does that render Thomas unqualified to serve on the Supreme Court? . . .

HOWARD SALASIN
Fort Washington, Pennsylvania

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Suzanne Garment offers a compelling analysis of Anita Hill's public posture. She deserves congratulations for a dispassionate article which will certainly not win her any friends in the feminist movement. I had, however, hoped for a little more attention to the role played by the media, since Mrs. Garment is a former member of the Fourth Estate and has contributed so valuably to the debate on major public issues.

Two main points are involved: The first, as Mrs. Garment notes in her opening sentence, is that none of us will ever know the truth. Only the two participants know. Thus, analysis, no matter how penetrating, is futile. The second point, it seems to me, is more important and could make a major difference in future controversies: why did the media use the story?

It is general practice in journalism not to use charge-denial stories which cannot be proven, regardless of the source. Indeed, even when a crime is involved, reporters generally do not use the material unless a warrant has been signed. Why were traditional journalistic rules violated in this instance? And will this violation set a pattern? Of course the story had tremendous "news value," since a Supreme Court nominee was involved and competition—fear of losing a "good story"—no doubt also played a part. Yet the question remains: why in this case were responsible principles abridged? . . .

It does not seem to have occurred to the journalists involved that the agony so decried on the nation's editorial pages could have been avoided if whoever received the FBI-Hill material had simply said, "I can't use this."

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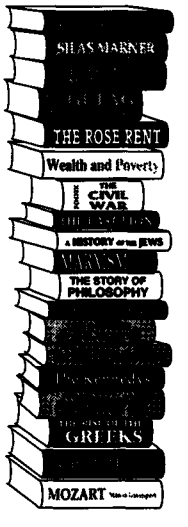

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While Mrs. Garment touches on the role of "leaks" at the end of her article and how they serve the interests of those who do the "leaking," her insights into the media's role and what needs to or should be done could have proved constructive and useful.

BERL FALBAUM
West Bloomfield, Michigan

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In her otherwise thoroughgoing article Suzanne Garment did not explore Anita Hill's "liberal credentials." The possibility that part of Hill's motivation in mounting a vendetta against Clarence Thomas might have been ideological was the subject of two articles in the wake of the controversy, one in the *Wall Street Journal*, the other in the Washington *Inquirer*. . . .

In her *Wall Street Journal* piece, Lally Weymouth . . . dismissed as nonsense the anti-Thomas camp's allegation that Hill had "no motive" for lying. She showed, on the contrary, that Thomas himself had once noted in a memorandum how he and his one-time employee, Anita Hill, "disagreed on positions [albeit] we were able to resolve disagreements professionally." And in an interview with the former dean of the Oral Roberts University Law School, Weymouth established that Hill "was far from [being] a conservative Republican; she tended to be liberal and feminist in her approach to things."

Weymouth also spent time on the campus interviewing Anita Hill's students, one of whom told her that "Miss Hill is not an innocent professor thrust into the situation by the media, . . . but rather a political activist furthering a cause she had so vehemently advanced in the past." Likewise, a former member of the University of Oklahoma's feminist group, the Organization for the Advancement of Women, for which Hill served as campus adviser, reported that Hill "is a liberal; she was for such things as 'comparable worth.' At our meetings, if it wasn't Reagan-bashing, it was Bush-bashing. They were terrified of *Roe* v. *Wade* being overturned." . . .

ALBERT L. WEEKS
Sarasota, Florida

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . It is not necessary to attribute . . . Anita Hill's inaction in the face of alleged sexual harassment to any particular motive. . . . Any rational person—and presumably Anita Hill is such a person—will remain in an employment situation only if he or she believes it is advantageous to do so. The concept of a "hostile" work environment is inherently subjective. To one person, it may mean a cramped office, to another, a strict dress code, etc. In any case, the proper response to an intolerable workplace is to quit and find a more compatible one. Staying put implies that it is not really intolerable.

. . . An employee is no more justified in asking a court to order an employer to provide a less hostile work environment than an employer would be to ask that it direct an employee to be more productive. At its core, the "hostile-work-environment" issue hinges on whether or not people are capable of acting to maximize their own welfare. The Declaration of Independence affirms our unalienable right to pursue happiness. It is indeed sad that so many Americans have forsaken their birthright and instead look to legal remedies to improve their condition.

PHILLIP GOLDSTEIN
Brooklyn, New York

SUZANNE GARMENT writes:

Many thanks for the letters that said complimentary things about my article on Anita Hill and Clarence Thomas. I agree with the writers that there are interesting issues it did not address. The first of these questions is straightforward: whose story, in the end, should we believe?

I believe Clarence Thomas. I have met him and spoken with him; I have shrewd and insightful friends who are his friends as well; and in writing my most recent book I investigated at some length his personal performance as chairman of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. I do not believe him capable of the behavior Anita Hill described.

But the public record of the Hill-Thomas episode simply does not, by itself, settle the matter. Arthur S. Bay has studied the public materials and come to a conclusion very different from mine. Such differences spring from the record's ambiguities and silences.

A few good reporters have now begun the hard job of digging into Hill's life in search of new information that might finally settle this question of credibility. These journalists have already come up with interesting and disturbing circumstantial evidence involving Hill. But if the citizens who had to "vote" for Thomas or Hill did not have a clean and clear public record available to them when they made their choice, neither did they have the new information that is now starting to emerge. Members of the public had to pronounce judgment on the record as it stood then. If we want to know what the Hill-Thomas affair tells us about our political system and our citizenry, we must first deal with the scandal as it appeared at the time to those who had to evaluate it, and that is what I tried to do in my article.

Let me add a word of caution: in writing about American political scandals, I have repeatedly found that when a big scandal breaks, secondary charges tend to come pouring out of the woodwork. In particular, I have seen how Clarence Thomas's opponents, trying to sink his Supreme Court nomination through scandal politics, peppered him with allegations ranging from judicial conflict of interest to the excessive viewing of pornographic films. Some of the secondary charges that arise in affairs like these are true, some are false, and a great many are exaggerated. Winnowing is required, and in this case the work has yet to be done. I am eager to see additional journalists join in the task.

Howard Salasin asks another question: "If Hill is to be believed, does that render Thomas unqualified to serve on the Supreme Court?" In one sense the answer is, for me, easy enough: if the actions complained of in a case like this one turn out to be signs of some major character flaw relevant to public performance, they may indeed prove disqualifying. If the behavior seems to bear little relationship to anything else in a candidate's public character, however, it should not be enough to do him in, and making a public scandal of the matter serves only to scare the best people away from public service.

But the issue is not really so simple as all that. It is one thing to say that we should not pry into most kinds of private acts when we consider candidates for high office. It is quite another matter to say that if we do learn of objectionable private behavior by these can-

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didates, we should just go ahead and confirm them as if we had never heard the news about them. In the first situation, we are merely ignorant; in the second, by contrast, we place a stamp of public tolerance, if not approval, on bad private behavior. We also unavoidably change, for the worse, the way we view these officials once they are in authority. We avoid acting unjustly toward candidates for office, but we do so at a cost to their moral authority and the tone of our civic culture.

That is why it is not enough to deal with conflagrations like the Hill-Thomas case simply by rejecting one charge or another as a basis for disqualifying a nominee. We must instead recognize that the problem lies deeper, in the modern notion that "the personal is political." It is a slogan that has permitted the use of the "character issue" in the service of the most bitter partisan politics, as an excuse for opening candidates' and nominees' personal lives to an examination that virtually no one can survive and remain capable of democratic leadership.

Finally, some of the letter-writers ask questions on which I wrote little because what I have to say is not novel.

For example, Berl Falbaum quite properly asks why the press abandoned its traditional standards of proof to chase after the ultimately unknowable matter of Thomas's private dealings with Hill. The reason, I think, is that those standards have been in the process of abandonment for the past 25 years. During the Vietnam era and beyond, as the press grew more antagonistic toward government, journalists became increasingly convinced that the "real" stories of American politics lay not in public documents or speeches by our leaders but in politicians' and officials' private interests, conspiracies, and gossip. In pursuing such stories, journalists got used to the idea of jettisoning old-fashioned notions like the necessity for named sources and corroborating evidence. The press coverage of the Hill-Thomas controversy was merely one striking example of the result.

In the same way, Albert L. Weeks asks why the press, without investigation, portrayed Hill as a conservative with no ideological motive for attacking Thomas. In this matter, too, the media behaved as they have done for quite some time. Hill's advocates, for obvious reasons, spoke of her as a conservative. A small but well-placed part of the press actively and fiercely supported Hill, and we can assume that these people deliberately chose to look no farther. Other journalists who failed to investigate Hill's views surely did so because they were afraid, consciously or not, to violate today's political stricture—among not only journalists but also other opinion-makers—against "blaming the victim." And still other press people, having little time and few resources, simply accepted the assumptions supplied by their fellow journalists. By this combination of manipulativeness and mindlessness are feeding frenzies shaped.

Suicide

To the Editor of Commentary:

Leon R. Kass's diatribe against euthanasia ["Suicide Made Easy," December 1991], reveals how obtuse, irrational, and, yes, evil are many arguments against euthanasia. Whereas some American jurors have demonstrated the equanimity and common sense to acquit mercy killers (see O. Ruth Russell's *The Right to Die*), Mr. Kass relentlessly persecutes and prosecutes them. The mercy killers have had the temerity to advocate a thorough, considerate, respectful, and technically precise exit from life and from society. Should mercy killers be inconsiderate or sloppy when assisting suicide?

How sanctimonious of Mr. Kass to acknowledge "the anguish and fear of patients and families in the myriad matters surrounding decay and death." Do doctors cause this anguish by vowing "neither to give nor suggest a deadly drug"? Medical torturers and their accomplices first prolong suffering and then hector the victims to show greater courage in the face of debilitation and death.

Mr. Kass concludes that the taboos against homicide, suicide, and euthanasia are breaking down. Why make these subjects taboo? Does planning to kill inevitably lead to unnecessary death? Then years and years of war games mas-

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terminded by the Pentagon and legitimated by Congress should have depopulated the planet. Could Mr. Kass prove that taboos against homicide are weakening? First, what do we count as homicide? Killings legally defined as homicide? Abortion? Faking mine-safety tests? Have rates of killings legally defined as homicide climbed persistently from the 1960's to the 1970's, 1980's, and 1990's? According to the *U.S. Uniform Crime Reports*, they have zigzagged. What about suicide rates? *U.S. Vital Statistics* reports a rise from 11.6 per 100,000 in 1970 to 12.6 per 100,000 in 1989. If taboos against homicide and suicide are breaking down, why are the changes in the rates so small?

Mr. Kass's figures on the volume of suicide attempts and suicidal thoughts among teenagers in 1990 constitute a cause for concern. He interprets teenage suicide and suicidal fantasy as a response to a "rising tide of gentle dehumanization." What on earth is this tide? If youths are suicidal, let us consider some well-grounded and testable theories as to why. Do they anticipate gaining distinction among their peers, or before some imagined audience? Have they proven too immature for sexual activity? Are they frightened by their own drug experiences? Have they no place in a service economy? Have they been torn or shattered by family conflicts? Have they found the schools aimless, inane, or oppressive compared with work or some other less "boring" alternative? These social issues cannot be ducked by censoring mercy killers' thoughts.

Not mercy killers, but Mr. Kass is confused about the philosophy of mercy killing. Proponents of euthanasia may approve choice, and offer reasons for choosing death without contradicting themselves. Mr. Kass fears that quadriplegics and sufferers from Alzheimer's disease will be pressured to commit suicide. Arguments for choice are a response to his concern.

Is Mr. Kass absolutely opposed to suicide? Would he have dissuaded Hitler? Would he disapprove of suicide by Pol Pot? Or by any of the thousands of political madmen and religious zealots who have embroiled dozens of nations in war during the 20th century? If we would welcome suicide by certain figures on limited occasions, should we prolong the lives of people who lived useless, degrading, or dehumanized lives; who inflicted these indignities upon others; or who led vital lives but were being reduced to uselessness and degradation by incurable disease?

Mr. Kass impugns and misrepresents the motives of mercy killers and their clients and loved ones. "It is surely not pure reason that finds life unbearable," he writes. And again, ". . . the true movers of the soul will be [not thoughts but] fear, resignation, and despair, or, in other words, the desire to escape." This statement distorts and debases the motives for euthanasia. The actual motivations include dying with dignity, which is an *ideal*; blocking the infliction of useless and harmful treatments; seizing responsibilities for living and dying and using drugs and removing them from the hands of medical "professionals," who technically prolong life but leave the waste and suffering to us; not squandering time or resources tied to wheelchairs, catheterized, or lying in vegetative and comatose states; reserving our limited resources for deserving survivors and denying these resources to grasping doctors, medical centers, ambulance companies, nursing-home operators, and drone-like nursing-home care.

Since Mr. Kass obfuscates and distorts the motives for mercy killing, we should cross-examine his motives for attacking rational and humane death. Is he bullying us to approve his role in helping lawyers, politicians, and their medical clients keep the final exits shut until they have thoroughly shaken us down, and reduced us mentally to their blustering level?

PHILIP G. GROTH
University of Wisconsin Centers
Janesville, Wisconsin

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

"Let's get serious about 'rationality' and reason," says Leon R. Kass at one point in a diatribe notable for sneering and sarcasm. He then cites Kant in support of a claim that the will to suicide is inherently self-contradictory. Logicians and semanticists, who imagine that only propositions can be self-contradictory, will no doubt be astonished. I expect to hear next about contradictory coat hangers, logically valid cabbages, or necessarily true window shades. The term "category mistake" is recommended for this sort of thing by some philosophers.

In an attempt to create, in the reader's mind, an association between Derek Humphry, the author of *Final Exit*, and the operators of the Nazi death camps, Mr. Kass refers to the gas (essentially cyanide) used in the camps. He asks, "Does the high priest of euthanasia [Humphry] think that we have forgotten how to shudder?"

He does not mention the American and British agents in World War II who carried cyanide pills for use when capture by the Gestapo was imminent. He must, to be consistent, maintain that the providers of the pills performed an evil act. But I have not forgotten how to shudder. What makes me shudder is the thought of the fate of those agents if "moralists" had denied them the means to avoid death by torture.

I would bet that most people have occasionally filled an idle moment with fantasies in which they rob banks, kill other people, or kill themselves. Forty years ago, in the interest of mischief or melodrama, I might have told an eager interviewer that I had "seriously contemplated" such things. It is difficult to believe that more than a small fraction of Mr. Kass's one in four high-school students ever really came close to suicide. According to the data he provides, out of 276,000 suicide attempts by teenagers in 1990, 365 were fatal, which means that more than 99.5 percent were not. One in four attempts caused serious injuries, implying that three out of four did not. It is probable, therefore, that most of these "attempts" were not serious. Perhaps they were faked to gain attention and sympathy. Humphry's book is not likely to have a significant effect upon the incidence of fatalities among the young and able-bodied, for two reasons. First, the availability of razors, tall buildings, and high-powered cars is unaffected by the book. Second, if someone's state of mind is such that he is inclined to take his own life, then clearly almost anything might give him the final nudge; if not one stimulus today, then another tomorrow or next week.

In any case, I submit that responsibility for an action lies with the individual who performs it, not with someone else who may have suggested it. I would apply that

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principle not only to suicide but also to actions that are subject to the criminal law. When a minor commits an "adult" crime such as rape or murder, we hear the fashionable excuses: the perpetrator is not personally responsible because comic books, TV programs, or society itself must have put the idea into his head. Mr. Kass enters the company of these explainers when he says that Humphry will have a lot to answer for if some teenagers follow the instructions in his book.

DAVID A. SHOTWELL
Alpine, Texas

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The venom of Leon Kass's article on Derek Humphry's *Final Exit* impelled me to buy and read the book.

Being in that gray area between middle and old age, having saved carefully over the years to ensure the future comfort of my wife and daughters, watching the slow and painful death of a dear friend from cancer of the pancreas, I am comforted by having this book at hand.

Though I agree with some of the philosophical points raised by Mr. Kass, I am mystified by the extreme, even hysterical, tone with which he sets them forth. I would find it arrogant to instruct others on such a profound and personal issue in such a manner.

While I do not intend to bring up the topic of *Final Exit* with my own teenagers, or with the young people with whom I work, I am grateful for myself that the book exists and that I possess it.

It was once said that liberals cared more for ideas than they did for people. I'm not sure that this trait can be so narrowly applied.

FREDERIC WILE
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Please enter my subscription for two years. I am a reader on occasion, but the article by Leon R. Kass on ethics, morality, and the taking of life was most appreciated. . . .

C. STUART BROAD
Chevy Chase, Maryland

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Leon Kass's article is an important corrective to the "easy-death" movements that seem to abound today. But suicide is even more of a social problem than Mr. Kass notes. . . . From 1950 to 1988, the national suicide rate rose slightly, . . . but for young people aged fifteen to twenty-four, the rate tripled: from 4.5 per 100,000 in 1950 to 13.2 in 1988. Other studies show an increase from 2.7 in 1950 to 11.3 in 1988 among teenagers. From 9 to 14 percent of all teenagers have attempted suicide at some point in their young lives!

But the problem is even more severe among the elderly, with white males over sixty-five having the highest rate of all—in 1986, 45.6 per 100,000. . . . We need to focus not only on the growing increase of suicide among youth, but also . . . among older people.

We can begin by sensitizing social workers, elder-care workers, and medical personnel to the growing suicide rates among the elderly in our society. We need more discussion and support groups, and all the other tactics now used with teenagers and college students. But let us not fool ourselves. The problem will not be easy to solve. I would bet that we have all had thoughts of suicide at one time or another as we age or as we contemplate a painful dying or incapacitation. Let us hope that our deaths are painless and quick, but we know that for some this will not be the case. Still, I do not think we need books that help us die more easily.

JACK NUSAN PORTER
The Spencer Group
Newton Highlands, Massachusetts

LEON R. KASS writes:

I confess. I wrote a polemic. In anger. In disgust. Not at the miserable people contemplating death, but at the suave, callous, banal, piously-oh-so-rational snake-oil-salesman-of-death, who coolly preaches lethal technical proficiency where loving care and company are called for. True, I did mount arguments, using in evidence extensive passages from the book itself. But I wrote with passion. And why not? The morally outrageous deserves moral outrage.

So I suppose I am partly to blame for Philip G. Groth's fulminations. Let me try to pacify him.

1. *About judging mercy killers*: I, obviously, do not "persecute" and "prosecute" them. I even said in this article that acts of suicide may be, in some cases, morally *pardonable*. In my earlier COMMENTARY article on this topic ("Death With Dignity & the Sanctity of Life," March 1990), I wrote: "When hearts break and people can stand it no longer, mercy killing will happen, and I think we should be prepared to excuse it—as we generally do—when it occurs in this way." But an *excuse* is not yet a *justification*, and these exceptional cases are no reason to overturn existing law and morals proscribing mercy killing. Mr. Groth asks, rhetorically, if I want mercy killers to be inconsiderate or sloppy. No, I do not—any more than I wish child molesters and prostitutes to be inconsiderate and sloppy. I want them not to practice their "trade." Technical virtuosity in doing wrong is no virtue.

2. *About "medical torturers and their accomplices"*: My objection to technicism extends also to excesses committed in the preservation and prolongation of life. I am opposed to overtreatment, to inadequate relief of pain, to excessive use of the hospital and intrusive technologies, etc. I favor hospices, home care, and human company. But, even with eliminating these evils and obtaining these goods, suffering, debility, and senility will not go away. Their *cause* is surely not the doctor's refusal to give a deadly drug. Mr. Groth's splenetic rantings, to be directed properly, should be vented rather against mortality and misfortune.

3. *About teenage suicide*: I never attributed teenage suicide to "a rising tide of gentle dehumanization." (Please, Mr. Groth, don't stitch together unrelated passages four pages apart.) And I nowhere imply that Derek Humphry is responsible for youth's suicidal tendencies. (Please, Mr. Groth, logic.) I fault him for his casual attitude about contributing to *their likelihood of "success."* (By the way, Jack Nusan Porter's letter should set Mr. Groth straight on the statistics and on why we are today increasingly concerned.)

But I do not, finally, want to comfort Mr. Groth, but to use his letter as evidence of what we have to fear. Derek Humphry was shrewd enough to confine his attention to suicide and its assistance. Mr. Groth begins and ends in defense of mercy killers—those who dispatch others, allegedly out of "mercy" or "compassion." In the crucial (sixth) paragraph about the moral justification of suicide, he shows his true colors. He begins with the goodness of suicide for Hitler and Pol Pot (I, by the way, favor not their suicide but their

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assassination), and reasons (?) as follows: "If we would welcome suicide by certain figures on limited occasions, should we prolong the lives of people who lived useless, degrading, or dehumanized lives" (Is this the voice of *mercy*?); "who inflicted these indignities upon others" (The voice of mercy or of eugenics?); "or who led vital lives but were being reduced to uselessness and degradation by incurable disease?" The Nazi apologists began from a right to commit suicide and tried to "derive" from it an argument to dispatch "useless lives." Mr. Groth begins from the desirability of death for Hitler yet somehow reaches the same Hitlerian conclusions. Unable or unwilling to make distinctions among the potentially euthanizable, Mr. Groth, like Derek Humphry, seems to have in mind myriad unwilling "clients" for his "mercy killers." No wonder he's angry with me.

David A. Shotwell's letter demonstrates that a little philosophy is a dangerous thing. He and other little philosophers, protecting our speech from "category mistakes," have so mistakenly categorized a divorce between speech and reality that they fail to see that certain (silent) actions might be, *in their inner* (but articulable) *meaning*, self-contradictory. If I intend to advance the cause of morality by eliminating myself as a moral agent, I would be engaged in self-contradictory conduct. This is the heart of Kant's argument against suicide in the passage I cited. One does not refute it by calling it names.

It is not I but Derek Humphry who drew the association between current German methods of euthanasia and the Nazi methods of extermination: he deplored the Nazi motives but at the same time praised their skill. Humphry, who offers not a single moral or philosophical argument for suicide (when pressed by William F. Buckley, Jr. on *Firing Line* for such moral justification, he pleaded as an excuse for his bankruptcy that he had never studied any moral philosophy), who shows not one ounce of gravity before the awesomeness of death or the dangerous complexities of human motives and moods, writes as a man who has no sense of horror or even of human decency. One should beware of taking moral lessons about life and death from such a shallow technician.

Neither, it is clear from the way he speaks, should we take moral lessons from Mr. Shotwell about teenage suicide. Teenage depression and angst are serious business. Someone who hands out loaded guns to such people is morally, and even legally, culpable. What about someone who gives out lethal medicine? Lethal know-how and advice? Let everyone read Bonnie Angelo's interview (in the November 18, 1991 issue of *Time*) of a mother and brother of a Humphry-directed suicide of a depressed young man (one of a growing number) and test Mr. Shotwell's refusal to hold Humphry partly responsible. I can assure Mr. Shotwell that I care at least as much as he does for personal responsibility, and do not blame "the system" for my own or anyone else's shortcomings. But ideas have consequences, and the purveyor of deadly instruction must be held accountable for the evil he assists, if he wishes also to claim credit for the good.

On the subject of providing suicide pills for American and British agents captured by the enemy, this is perfectly defensible, but not for Mr. Shotwell's reasons. Such agents were to kill themselves not (as he claims) "to avoid death by torture" but to avoid *betraying their country*, under torture. Their suicides are, in my view, best understood as acts of noble and patriotic self-sacrifice (which I applaud). Traditional Catholic casuists, intent on holding the line against the shedding of innocent blood, defend this practice rather on grounds of justice: a captured agent will likely be tortured into revealing state secrets; thus, as a "virtual traitor," he is not, in his taking of cyanide, committing suicide but is carrying out the state's just judgment against him. This argument is somewhat forced, but it has the merit of not allowing any merely private justification for the taking of innocent human life.

Frederic Wile's sober letter, at first glance, elicits more sympathy, in part for its gentler tone, though one wonders what kind of a man is "impelled" by my article to buy and read the book. Yet more careful scrutiny of his objections shows a deep difficulty in his position, more dangerous precisely because it seems so easygoing and benign. Mr. Wile mistakenly accuses me of trying "to instruct others on such a profound and personal issue." On the contrary, I was objecting to the shallow and coolly impersonal instructions of *Final Exit*—but, at the same time, making it clear that this is *not* merely a personal matter: taking one's life—like living one's life—rarely has purely private meaning. Mr. Wile is privately "comforted by having this book at hand," though he does not "*intend* to bring up the topic" with his own teenagers. What touching innocence: I am comforted; and I intend you no harm. What, Mr. Wile, will your teenagers think when they find the book in your library, or when they read your letter in COMMENTARY? What *moral* meaning of *family* life are you silently teaching them? Mr. Wile's well-meaning yet naive position is infected with massive self-deception, in the service of his own personal comfort. For the sake of such "personal" comfort, he (and the many supporters of Hemlock) would overthrow our opposition to mercy killing and assisted suicide, disseminate the instrumentalities of death to private parties, allow doctors to kill patients, expose the weak and the vulnerable to those who would put them out of their misery, and undermine our hard-won reluctance to take innocent life—in short, he would sacrifice the common good for his own private gain, with consequences much more profound and, finally, of vastly greater *personal* moment, for all members of our society.

Despite Mr. Wile's charge, I insist that it is my concern for real people—not for abstract moral ideas—that leads me, conservatively, to oppose euthanasia and to condemn Derek Humphry. Humphry is the true ideologue, devoted to a cause, without regard for the personal casualties (including also among family and friends)—not in his book, not in his life. Here is a man who helps kill his first wife, who abandons the second wife when she gets cancer, who threatens (when she criticizes him publicly) to tell the police about her part in the death of her own parents, who helps drive her to suicide, and who finally distances himself from her death by blaming her character, in a cold, heartless public advertisement. The life of this pious fraud, like his book, is a parable of the entire euthanasia movement: abandonment of real people to whom one owes care, masquerading as compassion for generalized suffering humanity. We have seen these false prophets

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before, and it is moral cowardice or worse not to expose them and their vile teachings.

The Dead Sea Scrolls

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

With his customary elegance (except, of course, for his characterization of me as "leather-lunged"), Robert Alter answers the question posed by his title, "How Important Are the Dead Sea Scrolls?" [February] with an emphatic, "Not very." As an antidote to the exaggerated, sensational, and irresponsible claims sometimes made for the scrolls, especially expectations for the unpublished ones, I heartily welcome Mr. Alter's critique. On the other hand, I believe he goes too far in downplaying their significance.

Consider the following opinions, which are either widely held by leading scholars and/or often associated with the scholar cited in parentheses:

• The scrolls cast a direct light on Second Temple Judaism, revealing a variety of elements that previously could at best be adumbrated.

• The biblical texts among the scrolls reveal how the Hebrew Bible developed from three different local texts—Palestinian, Egyptian, and Babylonian—probably under the influence of Hillel, who, since he came from Babylonia, selected Babylonian texts as authoritative (Frank Cross of Harvard).

• Occasionally, the Qumran biblical texts preserve a passage that was dropped, apparently accidentally, from the Hebrew text of the Bible.

• Since there are polemical texts among the scrolls directed against the Pharisees, we can learn a good deal about this group from these texts. This is important because the earliest rabbinic text that provides us with information about the Pharisees (the Mishnah) is more than a hundred years later than the latest of the Dead Sea Scrolls. (The Jerusalem and Babylonian Talmuds are several hundred years later yet.) These rabbinic sources have often been dismissed as historically unreliable—they are said to tell us nothing about the Pharisees before the destruction of the Temple by the Romans in 70 C.E. This conclusion must now be reassessed in light of the new evidence from Qumran (Lawrence Schiffman of New York University).

• The Dead Sea Scrolls are also important for tracing the history of early Christianity. The new conclusions are: (1) early Christianity is grounded more deeply in Jewish thought than was previously supposed; (2) aspects of Christian belief previously considered unique were in fact part of the intellectual baggage of the time (James VanderKam of Notre Dame).

• Finally, at the risk of sounding sensational, I will mention the Copper Scroll, which may be a secret treasure map telling, in perhaps some sort of code, where the Temple treasury was hidden.

This list could be lengthened, but there is enough here to demonstrate that the conclusions which may be drawn from the texts of the scrolls are very exciting indeed. They are not bombshells; they will certainly not undermine or even threaten the basic tenets of Judaism or Christianity; the marriage certificate of Joseph and Mary will not be found among them. But there is much that is important and significant in the scrolls even for the lay person.

No one can write about the scrolls without error, as my own writing on the subject would amply demonstrate (though I am certainly not a scholar of Robert Alter's stature). Yet in minor ways, here even Homer has nodded. . . .

Thus, Mr. Alter says that the Metropolitan Samuel, of the Syrian Jacobite Church in Jerusalem, who sold four intact scrolls to Yigael Yadin through an intermediary, "would hardly have sold them knowingly to an Israeli." However, according to Professor Harry Orlinsky who, under the alias Mr. Green, examined the Yadin purchase in a New York warehouse for authenticity, the Metropolitan may well have known—or at least strongly suspected—that he was selling them to an Israeli. The Metropolitan had been trying for years—unsuccessfully—to sell them on the international market. The reason he had such difficulty was that Jordan had made known its claim to title to the scrolls. This presented an obstacle to anyone but an Israeli. The price—a mere $250,000 for four intact scrolls—further suggests that the Metropolitan knew he was in effect selling the scrolls to Israel.

Mr. Alter says that, "In one cave alone, Cave 4, 800 scrolls and fragments were discovered." No intact scrolls were found in Cave 4. They were all in fragments. The best es-

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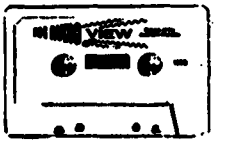

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timate of the number of scrolls from which these Cave 4 fragments came is somewhat over 500 or, let us say, 500. The number of scrolls, whether intact or fragmentary, in all eleven Qumran caves is about 800.

Mr. Alter says that Père Roland de Vaux, under whose direction the excavation in the Qumran region took place, was "frankly anti-Semitic." That Père de Vaux was no friend of Israel is true, but people who knew him differ as to whether he was anti-Semitic. We have no quotations from him to this effect. If he was anti-Semitic, he was not frank about it.

The reference to "talmudist Ezra Sussman" should obviously be to Yakov Sussman, as appears later in the article.

Whether Emanuel Tov was the first Jewish member John Strugnell brought onto the team, as Mr. Alter asserts, is debatable. He may mean Elisha Qimron, who was asked by Strugnell, slightly earlier, to work with him on the document known as MMT. Whether either Tov or Qimron should be considered a member of the team in the 1980's or simply recipients of a scroll assignment is uncertain.

Mr. Alter says that Magen Broshi, curator of the Shrine of the Book at the Israel Museum, "insisted that each scholar assigned to editing a scroll be given an unambiguous deadline, with 1997 set as the date for submission of all materials and 2000 as the date for the completion of publication. These energetic steps have by and large been ignored in the recent outcry. . . ." But it was not Broshi who insisted on the deadline. Whatever credit is deserved for this "insistence," as I am sure Mr. Broshi would agree, goes jointly to the scrolls advisory committee of which Professors Jonas Greenfield and Shemaryahu Talmon were also members, and especially to the new director of the Antiquities Authority, Amir Drori. Indeed, Mr. Broshi was one of those who defended the slow pace of publication. . . .

But the sad fact is that the deadlines that were "insisted on" were not "unambiguous." They were, in the language of the timetable itself, "suggested" deadlines. At the time this "suggested timetable" was made known, the Antiquities Authority would not say who "suggested" the deadlines (it was Strugnell), who had agreed to the deadlines, or what would happen if the deadlines were not met. Finally, no deadline for "the completion of publication" was included. This is why the "energetic steps have, by and large, been ignored." In the event, few if any of the projected deadlines in the "suggested timetable" have been met.

As to the percentage of the scrolls that have been published, Mr. Alter says that "Israeli authorities claim as much as 80 percent of the material has already been published; some critics put the figure at only 25 percent." The difference lies not so much in the estimate as in what the estimate is of. The critics, like me, who refused to accept the laggard pace of the official editing team, pointed out that the team had completed only slightly more than 20 percent of its assignment. Its assignment was to publish only the 500 fragmentary scrolls from Cave 4, of which, after nearly 40 years, it published about 100. When defenders of the team, like Mr. Broshi, say that 80 percent of the scrolls have been published, they are counting words; they include the large intact scrolls that were published early on by Israeli and American scholars, implicitly giving the Cave 4 team credit for publications with which they had nothing to do.

Martin G. Abegg, Jr., who, with Professor Ben-Zion Wacholder of Hebrew Union College, created the computer-generated transcripts of the scrolls, is not a "computer specialist," as Mr. Alter states. He is at best a computer buff, as he himself is the first to acknowledge.

The concordance from which these computer-generated transcripts were made was not "privately circulated" before being printed in an edition of 30 in 1988. Before this edition, there was only one copy of the concordance—on three-by-five cards in the basement of the Rockefeller Museum.

Mr. Alter says that the computer-generated texts produced by Wacholder and Abegg are not only "shady" but "shaky." I have already addressed the "shady" charge on the op-ed page of the New York *Times* (September 7, 1991), so I will not address that issue here. It is true, however, that people who objected to our publication of these texts, like Professor Strugnell, have said they are 20-percent inaccurate. A less biased source, Professor Hartmut Stegemann of Göttingen University, has pronounced the computer-generated texts that he is intimately familiar with (the Damascus Documents; Stegemann is charged with arranging the fragments in proper order) to be 98-percent accurate.

It is not difficult to understand why these texts are so accurate. The original transcriptions, made mostly in the late 1950's, were copied by men who are recognized on all sides as expert transcribers—people like Strugnell and J.T. Milik. The concordance was then made by other scholars who are also recognized for their careful work—people like Joseph Fitzmyer and Raymond Brown. Before entering a word in the concordance, Fitzmyer and Brown would examine not only the transcription, but the actual plate containing the fragment, and a photograph—usually infra-red—of the plate. If the concorder read the text differently in any way from the transcriber, the matter was discussed and resolved. After the transcription was computer-generated in 1991, it was reviewed and sometimes corrected by Wacholder, no slouch himself. The result is not nearly as "shaky" as Mr. Alter suggests.

Finally, Mr. Alter says that the "exclusive subject" of the Wacholder-Abegg volume is "a rotation of priestly celebrants." Not so. Without commenting on the importance of the Qumran calendar which is revealed in this "rotation of priestly celebrants" (the contents have not yet been subjected to scholarly analysis and interpretation), . . . I would only add that the volume also contains fragments of the critically meaningful Damascus Document. Even more important—something Mr. Alter could not know—the next volume of the Wacholder-Abegg project is ready to go to press. It contains more than three times as much material as the first volume. It will not make the front page this time, but it will supply scholars with exciting new texts (in Hebrew only, as Mr. Alter points out) to study and interpret.

HERSHEL SHANKS
Editor, *Biblical Archaeology Review*
Washington, D.C.

ROBERT ALTER writes:

On the essential question of the importance of the scrolls, I differ with Hershel Shanks only in regard to emphasis, though emphasis may be crucial. I clearly stated in my

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article that the scrolls offer precious testimony about a historical moment that was hitherto known quite imperfectly, and Mr. Shanks cites several particular instances in which that testimony is proving instructive. What I objected to were the inordinate expectations as to what the scrolls might reveal about the origins of Christianity and rabbinic Judaism, and nothing Mr. Shanks says in any way tempts me to modify my view.

Let me briefly address Mr. Shanks's catalogue of claimed errors. There were two typographical errors in the piece, the initial reference to Yakov Sussman as Ezra, and the inadvertent substitution of Broshi for Drori as the man who insisted on deadlines for delivery of materials for publication. Surely someone with Mr. Shanks's experience as an editor could have figured out that these mechanical slips had nothing to do with a lack of familiarity with the facts. Indeed, Yakov Sussman's essential *Tarbitz* article, which I cite later in my essay, precisely confirms my own sense that the Dead Sea Covenanters represent an evolutionary dead end in the development of Judaism. As someone who has had occasion to request materials on deadline from other scholars, I can make no sense at all of Mr. Shanks's growling about suggested deadlines. You can set a date for a scholar and then urgently remind him, but if he refuses to deliver on time, you are faced with the choice of starting from scratch with someone else or chiding and waiting. Because of this lamentable circumstance, all scholarly deadlines are suggested ones.

I am mystified by the fuss Mr. Shanks makes about the percentage of the scrolls still unpublished: precisely what I said was that given the fragmentary nature of the materials, anyone was free to manipulate percentages to his own advantage. The quibble about Martin G. Abegg, Jr.'s professional designation is silly. Whatever Mr. Abegg's vocational attachments, he is enough of an expert to carry out the formidable task of using a computer to generate texts from a concordance, and he was identified in the New York *Times* as a computer expert. The reliability of the concordance itself, as Mr. Shanks himself concedes, is a matter of dispute. I made no claim either to have examined the concordance or to have done paleographic work with the scrolls, though at least some authorities who have done both raise doubts about the reliability of the concordance. But I do thank Mr. Shanks for informing me and my readers that the concordance existed only in a single copy on three-by-fives until 1988. John Strugnell consulted Yakov Sussman as well as Elisha Qimron on the MMT document (mainly because he needed help about questions of Jewish law, of which he is ignorant). This is surely not equivalent to inviting a scholar to join the international editorial committee, as Strugnell did with Emanuel Tov. On Père de Vaux's prejudice against Jews, I relied on the anecdotal evidence of people who had known him. In any case, a youthful affiliation with Action Française hardly suggests a great fund of sympathy toward the Jews.

As to the contents of the Wacholder-Abegg volume, I had forgotten that it included a few fragmentary variants of the Damascus Scroll (which already exists in two different manuscript versions), though the bulk of the book is certainly devoted to tables of rotation of priestly celebrants. It remains to be seen whether "scholarly analysis and interpretation" will manage to spin out of this historical straw the gold of illuminating evidence about Judaism around the turn of the Christian era, though it is understandable that Mr. Shanks, as the publisher of the volume, should live in hope of that magical transformation.

How to Be PC

To the Editor of Commentary:

There is often wit in Commentary that makes you smile, . . . but laugh out loud? For that pleasure we have Daniel Seligman to thank. His "How to Be Politically Correct" [January] hit one eye after another (not a bull's eye, which would be politically incorrect). Here are a few of my additions to his list:

Milk, whole milk, is not politically correct.

Opera is becoming politically correct, now that you can read the words being sung in the theater.

William Faulkner, who identified a good number of his people of color as being yellow, is not politically correct; moreover, he smoked a pipe (he smokes it on a stamp that must now cause the postal service uneasiness), which is, of course, politically incorrect.

Running for exercise is still politically correct, no matter the damage it does to knees; whereas swimming is not, swimmers being a kind of elite. You have to know something about swimming to do it.

Frederick Douglass is not politically correct.

Nixon will never be politically correct, but John Adams's opera *Nixon in China* is.

Integration is not politically correct, which is a tragedy. Speaking of which, tragedy is not politically correct. Hard choices are not politically correct.

Male behavior is not politically correct unless women are doing it.

Hate to say it, but Commentary is not politically correct, but then that's why your readers like it.

Thomas Putnam
Buffalo, New York

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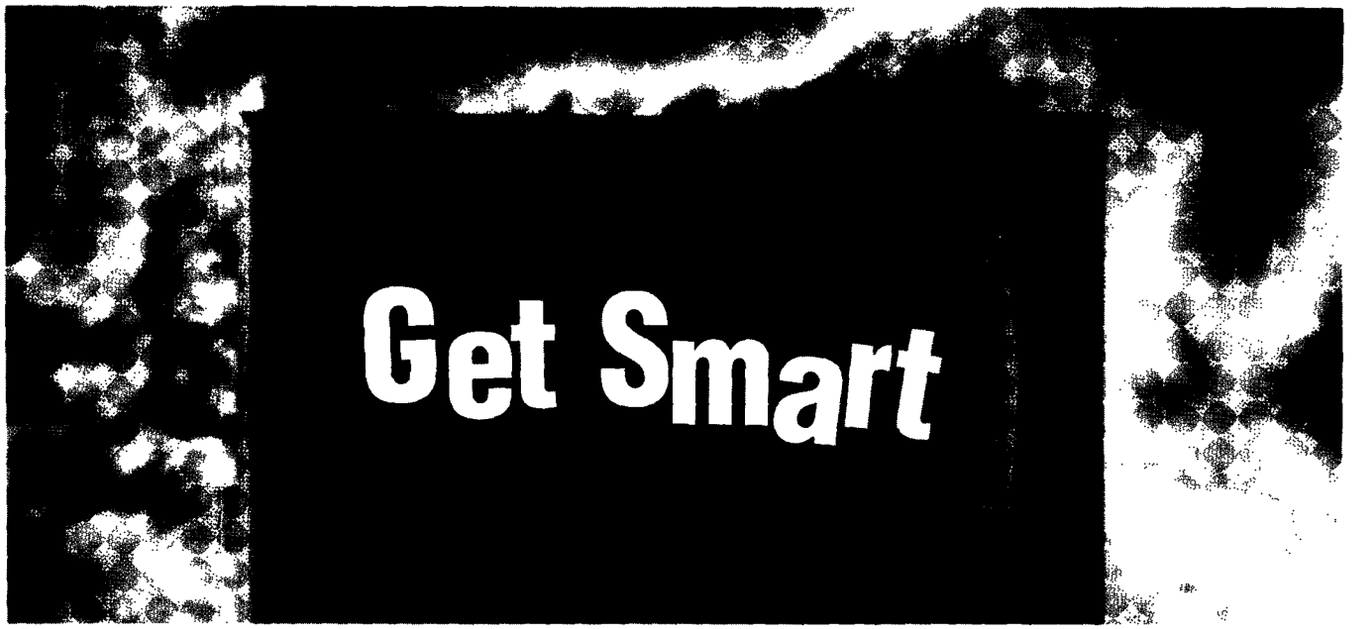

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Is America on the Way Down?

(Round Two)

In our March issue, EDWARD N. LUTTWAK *argued that the United States is on the way to becoming a third-world country, as inferior to Japan as Brazil today is to us.* ROBERT L. BARTLEY *countered with the view that, far from being in a state of decline, the U.S. is still the wealthiest and most influential society in the world and is, moreover, heading toward even greater achievements in every sphere.*

COMMENTARY *solicited comments on this debate from a number of writers who have in recent years dealt with the allegations of American decline. Their responses appear below in alphabetical order.*

Peter L. Berger: The big dispute between "declinists" (a rather terrible term) and their critics is over the status of the United States as an economic power. Figures are hurled back and forth, trade deficits versus exchange rates, GNP (gross national product) per capita versus PPP (purchasing-power parity), and even more arcane econometric artifacts. Econometrics is a very imprecise discipline, best suited to dreamy, solitary types with a penchant for mysticism. Those who prefer a scientifically more rigorous approach to the world are better served by poetic intuition. Is the United States a society in decline? Here is a very strong intuition: people don't fall all over themselves in order to clamber aboard a sinking ship.

This, of course, is literally so in regard to immigration. To be sure, other affluent societies also find themselves pressured by large numbers of would-be immigrants, though the United States continues to be the destination of first choice worldwide. What is more important, though, is that the United States is the only major industrial society that has shown itself able to integrate people coming from just about anywhere—indeed, the only society that is both politically and culturally positioned to favor such integration. The Europeans are agonizing over the problem. As for the Japanese, they are heading quite rapidly toward a moment when a number of trends will converge: their critically aging population (the highest life expectancy and close to the lowest birth rate of any advanced society); their belief that married women should stay at home with the children; their hysterical aversion to letting in foreigners (especially fellow Asians) for longer than brief visits; and their twin illusions that all manufacturing can be moved offshore and that all domestic-service industries can eventually be staffed by robots. Perhaps some economists will someday stumble on the fact (hard though it will be to translate it into mathematics) that American attitudes toward immigrants, and the institutions that embody these attitudes, are a comparative advantage for the American economy.

But there is another, even more important, point to be made: huge numbers of people who cannot or do not wish to move to America imitate America where they are. Put differently, whatever may be the superpower status of the United States in political, military, or economic terms, American culture enjoys a status of worldwide hegemony, with no likely competitors in sight. This hegemony begins with language. A few years ago Claudio Véliz, the Chilean historian, wrote a delightful essay entitled "A World Made in English." True—and in *American* English. It is, of course, conceivable that one uses a language for purely instrumental reasons—say, as English is the *lingua franca* of international civil aviation—without thereby acquiring any other elements of the culture from which this language comes. In this case, however, that is very clearly not so: with American English comes an enormous package of other cultural components—habits, styles, institutions, values, entire world views. In this time and age one does not speak American innocently, as Iranian mullahs know well and as Komsomol officials used to know.

The world speaks American, sings American, dances American, dresses American, eats American. From Vladivostok to Valparaiso, millions of people of every race, color, or creed read or try to read the *Reader's Digest*, listen and dance to rock music, wear jeans, and eat cheeseburgers. This short list of items of American popular culture can easily be expanded until it includes a substantial portion of what constitutes the structure of

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everyday experience. In the language of phenomenology, the "life-world" is being Americanized.

Anti-American ideologues have understood this process as one of cultural imperialism or colonization. If so, it is curious that it has occurred almost everywhere without any coercion or even much persuasion: the world is begging to be "colonized." Why? Because this package of American behavior and commodities *represents* a distinctive angle on life, one which is desirable because it seems to fit well with the aspirations of the great modernizing transformation. The language, the music, the physical movements, and all the material accouterments represent values. To be sure, in part they are simply the values of material well-being. But that is by no means the whole story. There are also such values as individual rights and self-expression, innovation and experiment, egalitarianism, a distinctive sense of humor.

To say this, of course, is not to give blanket approval to every aspect of this triumphant popular culture, some of which one might find unattractive, even repugnant. Rather, it is simply to state a fact: American popular culture is absolutely dominant worldwide, and this dominance relates to styles of life and institutions that go far beyond popular culture—to the relations between the sexes and the generations, between rulers and ruled, and thus finally to the core institutions of democratic capitalism.

The status of American "high" culture is less absolute, less dramatic. It is quite dominant all the same. American *ideas* move powerfully around the world, too. The American goddess of democracy erected by the protesting students in the heart of Beijing was the most poignant image of this dominance. But here, too, there is a large package, this time an ideational one. It contains the value systems of romantic love and of education, of psychotherapeutic self-cultivation (in various denominational versions), of feminism, environmentalism, and other emancipatory gospels yet to be born. Asia Minor was once called the *vagina deorum*, the womb of the gods; today that womb is the American idea industry. Again, these doctrines and cults may be deemed severally good, bad, or indifferent. The point here, quite simply, is that they are *American* doctrines and cults. And, last but not least, the most dynamic and universally expanding religious movement in the world today is an evangelical Protestantism of unmistakably American provenance.

Is it possible that this cultural explosion goes hand in hand with the onset of economic doom, a final screech, as it were, of the owl of Minerva? It is possible. But it is not very likely. Actually, at least some of the reasons why it is unlikely might be put in econometric terms.

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Francis Fukuyama: Paul Kennedy, in *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*, played a clever trick on conservatives by linking the question of decline to American military spending, causing them to see any discussion of decline as a politically motivated attack on the U.S. position in the world. But America has been in a long-term decline for reasons having nothing to do with defense spending, and Edward N. Luttwak has performed a service in delinking these issues. While long-time readers of Luttwak will note a familiar rhetorical overstatement of his case, I believe that we would do far better to heed his analysis of America's present situation than Robert L. Bartley's. While American values have triumphed around the world in recent years, it will do us no good to kid ourselves that everything is right with America. The fact that we can produce custom-built precision munitions is no consolation for not making decent automobiles. As with a star that has gone supernova, the light emanating from the United States continues to shine brightly at the periphery of the universe where it is observed by various Russians, Chinese, Lithuanians, and the like; but the energy at the core is rapidly extinguishing.

The first problem with Bartley's argument is that he measures national success by consumption, at which Americans are without question good. He takes comfort in the fact that the American standard of living, measured by factors like the ownership of automobiles, televisions, VCR's, and houses, is superior to that of other developed countries, including Japan. But that is just the problem: anyone can borrow a lot of money and throw a big party for himself, and if you measure your success by how much you have consumed, you will have done well. Yet in the long run, you (or your children) get to spend only what you produce. Those Japanese, with their small houses and long commutes on public transportation, are busy saving the difference between what they consume and produce, and lending it back to Americans so the latter can keep up their consumption of Japanese automobiles, television sets, and VCR's.

Bartley's relaxed attitude toward the trade deficit and the "hollowing-out" of the American manufacturing base would be appropriate if it were clear that the chief aim of everyone in the international economic system was the maximization of consumer welfare, as is arguably the case with the United States. Luttwak's concept of "geoeconomics" attempts to articulate the fact that, contrary to the assumptions of liberal economic theory, economic activity also serves the national-security and prestige goals of nations, such as the control of leading-edge, high-value-added technologies. Life in a world filled with neomercantilist states like Japan means that the distribution of manufacturing capabilities between them and a more classically liberal state like the U.S. does not simply reflect "comparative advantage." I am

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not sure that the solution to this problem is for the United States to resort to neomercantilism itself, as Luttwak at times seems to suggest. But we will not be happy if, as a nation, we become exclusively purveyors of potato chips rather than computer chips. There is something wrong with an economy that employs 70 percent of the world's lawyers, and in which experienced programmers can be hired away by the Japanese for much less than the salary of a first-year associate in a New York law firm.

AT THE root of our current economic difficulties is the problem of education, which Bartley mentions only in passing. Anyone with school-age children will know that we have let our public-school system deteriorate to an incredible extent over the past couple of generations. This wound is entirely self-inflicted, and has less to do with lack of public support for education than with the system's capture by a top-heavy and closed educational establishment. Multiculturalism is only the latest in a series of educational fads to which we have exposed our children. Bartley rightly celebrates the information revolution, but this revolution has come at the expense of the traditional working class, whose children are wholly dependent on the public-school system to give them skills appropriate to a 21st-century economy. If they continue to be marginalized by a faltering school system, we will have retreated considerably from that equality of opportunity essential to American democracy. Much as vouchers and other market-oriented solutions may help, they are not a substitute for a serious education policy, which in the final analysis has to be a responsibility of the state rather than of markets.

Beyond the economic decline is a clear-cut deterioration in our moral life. If there is any broadly felt sense of malaise in the U.S. today, it has to do with the decline of *community*—from the breakdown of the family, to the prevalence of crime, to the loss of any meaningful sense of neighborhood, to the fragmentation of national purpose. Most of us could recognize in Tom Wolfe's novel *Bonfire of the Vanities* our America, a place somewhat less appealing than the one celebrated by Bartley. This disintegration comes from deep within the heart of liberalism and the cult of rights it promotes. The retention of a society in which the moral bonds linking individuals have not been so badly frayed may in the end be a more important strength of contemporary Asian societies than their economic efficiency.

With the exception of the last point, these problems do not reflect any fundamental crisis of our civilization—as Bartley quotes the former French Foreign Minister, Jean François-Poncet, they are not anything that could not be fixed by a 50-cent-per-gallon gasoline tax. Yet I have not seen anyone in our political class (least of all on the *Wall Street Journal*'s editorial page) willing to advocate even so minor a tax. I would like to be optimistic about the ability of American democracy to rise to this challenge, but it will certainly not happen if conservatives in this country spend their time asserting that no significant deterioration in American life has occurred.

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George Gilder: We all knew that regardless of any peace dividend, there would be certain transitional problems in the passage to a post-cold-war world, but no one led us to expect the grisly traumas of demobilization now being suffered by Edward N. Luttwak. There should surely be some government program to ease the strains of conversion of such a powerful military thinker into an analyst of domestic affairs.

In any case, Luttwak shows much promise. Apart from his stylistic felicities, he excels most professional analysts in recognizing that the key social problem is female-headed families, that our educational system is foundering on a lack of discipline and standards, and that the U.S. suffers from "the most original invention of American statecraft: representation without taxation to extract 'entitlements' galore. . . ." If he pursued this line of thought further he might grasp that the vagrancy problem which so exercises him is caused not by some dire national decline but by the extension of welfare entitlements to the many millions of indigent people unable to fill out the forms for AFDC but nonetheless fully able to figure out how to qualify as homeless.

Luttwak also might connect all his portentous per-capita income data to the fact that, unlike his favored foreign countries, the U.S. has a population and workforce that has been expanding rapidly. Some 40 million new U.S. jobs were created since 1970, while job formation and population growth in Europe and Japan have inched up at a slow pace.

Luttwak's airport index of national prospects shows conceptual creativity, but he is weak in application. Tokyo's Narita is one of the world's dingier aerodromes, less "shiny" by far than O'Hare, Miami, Dallas-Fort Worth, Los Angeles International, Seattle-Tacoma, Las Vegas, and several other American airports. As a newcomer to domestic journalism, Luttwak is allowed one article, I suppose, resorting to the taxi driver as political and economic consultant and symbol. But I hope this is the last. Anyway, in my experience, U.S. taxi drivers, outside of New York City, have a distinctly better command of English than do Tokyo's.

On trade, Luttwak suffers from the outdated notion of a significant distinction between assets (land, hotels, technologies, corporate equities) and products (computers, capital equipment,

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films, software packages, sides of beef, oranges). In the current world economy, assets have become as reproducible and tradable as any other products or services. The chief difference is that when the Japanese buy an orange or a side of beef, they eat it and we do not have it any more; but after they buy the hotels or the technologies, we still have them, along with new funds to direct toward the creation of yet more valuable assets in the future. That is why all during the period when the Japanese were buying U.S. assets, total American assets were growing at an unprecedented pace and the average U.S. citizen approximately tripled his asset holdings.

Apparently unconscious of the globalization of capital markets, Luttwak seems to suppose that dollars accruing to a foreign firm are less likely to be invested in the U.S. than the dollars of an American firm. But in either case, the capital will flow toward the best opportunities; Barton Biggs of Morgan Stanley knows how to buy foreign equities just as well as Sony's Akio Morita does. In recent years, Honda has invested a larger portion of its profits in the U.S. than has Ford. If the U.S. creates a bad investment climate by barring outsiders, both Americans and foreigners will send their investments elsewhere. If the U.S. favors entrepreneurship and creativity, both Americans and foreigners will continue to send money and talent here and we will continue to run a trade gap in the less important categories that Luttwak stresses.

Of course, if the U.S. fails to keep pace technologically or goes into a siege of bashing the rich and competent, the Japanese will become the world's dominant power. But even if so, U.S. citizens will be better off than if both countries fail. Luttwak's long preoccupation with war, which is truly a zero-sum contest, ill befits him for the complexities of positive-sum trade.

Luttwak is a fan of reciprocity and balance in trade and investment. I agree with Robert L. Bartley that they are, at best, numerological fetishes that distract us from everything important. Nonetheless, Luttwak does not even get the facts right. The Japanese have permitted a massive American invasion of their economy in recent years, and if Luttwak had opened his eyes after leaving Narita, he would have seen evidence that the Japanese now buy more U.S.-brand merchandise per capita than Americans buy Japanese-brand merchandise. Of course the real picture is more complicated than this, but it in no way justifies Luttwak's xenophobia.

I am sure that Luttwak won't believe it, but the U.S. is still doing fine in the technology race. Not only are we keeping pace with the Japanese in largely complementary fields, we are far outperforming the Europeans, who have chosen Luttwak's policy of excluding Japanese products and investments. During the 1980's, the U.S. expanded its global market share in total manufacturing, in manufactured exports, and in global capital-equipment sales. Just as all industries, including consumer electronics, are engorged by the expansion of digital computing, the U.S. holds more than 60 percent of the world market in computers, software, key peripherals (such as hard-disk drives and printers), and leading-edge microchips (such as microprocessors, chip sets, programmable logic devices, flash memories, and digital signal processors). The U.S. has three times the computer power per capita of Japan or Europe.

As the world moves into a new era in communications, spearheaded by wireless telephony and fiber-optic video, the U.S. also maintains huge strength in communications equipment and services and is the global center of both the cellular-telephone and cable-TV industries. All of these industries, incidentally, were utterly dependent for their growth on Michael Milken's junk bonds, which Luttwak ridicules. Luttwak finds General Instrument's role in digital HDTV "pathetic," but I assure him that the shareholders do not, as General Instrument will not only gain the flow of royalties that he disdains but is also likely to produce most of the cable-converter boxes, satellite descramblers, and other digital devices that will capture much of the hardware profit in the industry. In fact, the greatest beneficiaries of digital television, as I have pointed out elsewhere, are likely to be U.S. computer companies.

No one can deny the many portents of Japanese advance in cars, machine tools, robotics, supercomputers, memory chips, and leading-edge capital equipment, or Japanese dominance in consumer electronics. Fears of a U.S. collapse, however, are countervailed by the powerful U.S. position in computers and other electronic systems. In 1991, U.S. output of electronic systems was some $216 billion, almost twice Japan's production and nearly equal to Japan and Europe put together. Even without military production, the U.S. produces over 50 percent more electronic gear than Japan. In software, the U.S. controls nearly two-thirds of the world market.

Decisive in all depictions of a dramatic Japanese gain in market share during the 1980's is the collapse of the value of the dollar, largely engineered by trade-gap fetishists (like Luttwak). For example, between 1985 and 1988, when the biggest Japanese market-share gains were reported, Japan's output of electronic equipment rose 61 percent. During that same period, however, the yen rose 90 percent against the dollar. Measured in yen rather than dollars, Japanese output actually declined, while U.S.-dollar output rose 20 percent. The dramatic alterations in market share are mostly a figment of global monetary shifts rather than changes in technological competitiveness.

One part of the explanation for real market-share losses by American firms is the inevitable slippage of the innovator. As radical innovations

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become routine products, the pioneer always loses share from the period of his original monopoly. If, like Luttwak, you keep your eyes on the declining dinosaurs (analog consumer electronics, commodity microchips) rather than on the ascendant industries (microprocessors, digital video), you might imagine that the leader (the U.S.) is actually falling behind.

Today, for example, market-share data would suggest that the U.S. is losing ground to the Japanese in supercomputers. A better way to put it is to say that the U.S. is shifting ground in supercomputers, from machines with one to eight processors to massively parallel machines with up to 64,000 processors. The Japanese have indeed caught up in conventional supercomputer hardware, but U.S. entrepreneurs have changed the rules of the game.

IN SUM, the Japanese represent a major rival to the U.S. across the range of high technologies. But, despite the array of evidence offered by Luttwak, the U.S. remains on top in the information industry and promises to stay on top through the next decade.

In a world of increasingly global companies, the biggest short-run threat to U.S. supremacy, in fact, is not the Japanese government and its industrial policies but the U.S. government and its obsession with dominating the "entire food chain of electronics" for reasons of national security. No nation will ever again achieve the kind of industrial dominance and autonomy held by the U.S. after World War II. The new high-tech economy is globally interdependent. Nations that seek technical autarky will lose ground to nations open to the best ideas, immigrants, and technologies from around the world.

In the future, the balance of immigrants and ideas will be far more important than the balance of trade. Fast-growing and innovative nations will usually attract capital from around the world and thus run trade deficits. The U.S., for example, ran a trade gap for the first 150 years of its history as it used foreign capital to open the frontiers of the American West. Today, opening the frontiers of the information economy, the U.S. again attracts capital and runs trade deficits. But competitors should not on these grounds rush to sell short the American future.

To be sure, as Luttwak points out, there are serious clouds on the U.S. horizon. The long-term future of U.S. competitiveness depends on the success of the reform movements in education. With more school administrators in New York State alone than in all of Western Europe, the U.S. leads the world in educational bureaucracy and lags pathetically in educational achievement. This is no coincidence. Recent studies by the Brookings Institution show that in general the more bureaucrats in a school, the worse its performance. Also afflicting the schools is deterioration on the home front. Like many Western nations, the U.S. is suffering from a siege of family breakdown and from resulting outbreaks of crime, violence, and drug addiction. Ultimately the success of the U.S., as of all other societies, will depend on the moral fiber of the nation's families, the source of the human capital that is crucial in the coming age of information.

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Harvey C. Mansfield, Jr.: Edward N. Luttwak declares with a certain relish that the United States is headed downward into poverty and disgrace. It is not the first time we have heard a dire forecast for our country, and we know that at some time it will come true, since everything human is mortal. But one could wish for a more responsible formulation than Luttwak's, one that would tell us what to do. What is the cause of our plight and has it a remedy? It makes no sense to sound off without first having made a "search for the deeper sources" of the trouble, the inquiry that Luttwak sets aside. A messenger of bad news will be kicked, and deserves to be, if he offers nothing but discouragement.

In fact, Luttwak does not seem to understand his own bad news. His theme is economic failure, but what really (and rightly) riles him is moral outrage over the impunity of louts, loiterers, and "unkempt urban vagrants" in contemporary America. He makes no mention of America's tremendous victory in the cold war, topped off by sensational success in the Gulf War. Those were triumphs for the American way of life in politics and economics. But they left strangely untouched the critique of our way of life that comes from our anti-bourgeois culture and postmodern philosophy.

It is perhaps not so serious if our friends overtake us in some respects by imitating our system and acquiring its virtues. America has always intended itself as a model for mankind. Since our principles are universal, we have no right to begrudge the result of their acceptance by others. What would we have had the Japanese and Germans do instead of what they have done since World War II? American self-interest has nothing of its own to cherish when it denies the right of others' self-interest.

What should concern us is not so much a failure to be first in everything as the possibility that we no longer believe in ourselves, i.e., in our principles. Our principles are self-interest and its accompanying bourgeois virtues, for self-interest does not work well without honesty and responsibility and it does not generate those virtues on its own. Luttwak suggests—he does not say—that our culture today, by simultaneously denying the legitimacy of self-interest and the value of good

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character, is the cause of mediocre economic performance. One could add that it is perhaps also the cause of political and constitutional ills which might be summarized as following from the attempt to make government guarantee happiness rather than protect freedom. That attempt does not destroy self-interest but only links it to loutishness and another less visible form of dependency rather than to bourgeois virtue. Louts are dependents who express their frustrated desire for freedom in surliness. More worrisome than louts are the yuppies, who find respectability in buying fancy new things and in living the life of live and let live. Their dependency is disguised by their informal manners, by their lack of interest in public affairs, and even by their economic productivity. Both kinds of dependent are bad citizens, a worse fault than being unproductive.

WHAT Americans need to do in the aftermath of victory in the cold war is, first, celebrate it. We should be proud of the bipartisan policy of containment that we sustained for 45 years despite all the difficulties republics have in keeping to a long-term enterprise. Victory was unexpected but not undeserved, and we owe ourselves a pat on the back. Our present gloomy mood, to which Luttwak contributes, is unbecoming and unreasonable.

Next, we should rethink the connection between our philosophy and culture, on the one hand, and our politics and economics, on the other. Why are they now so strikingly at odds? We have a postmodern philosophy that continues to attack modern progress even after totalitarianism, the worst political evil mankind has ever known, has been defeated and discredited for the foreseeable future, and American democracy has been vindicated as a model and a shield for all peoples. The same philosophy asserts that everything human is historical and hence denies the existence of a permanent human nature in which self-interest might be embedded. It therefore cannot explain why Communism, which ignored self-interest, failed to work; for according to the historicist view every system is adequate to its time and must "work" by definition.

Together with this philosophy we have a culture that is aggressively anti-bourgeois and intent on shocking and ridiculing the American citizen and the American entrepreneur. In our country now we have a culture war (James Davison Hunter has described it well in his *Culture Wars*) between those who want to be "inclusionary," i.e., overlook all standards of bourgeois virtue, and those who want to apply those standards to all, even when they cause "disparate impact" on the poor and the less favored. In the former camp are almost all our culture-makers.

When I reflect on the discrepancy between our success and our self-hatred, I am unable to share the optimism of Robert L. Bartley. He offers the second industrial revolution as our salvation, while admitting that the first was more threatening to freedom. But suppose that the second revolution, while eroding the power of governments, should do the same for individuals, leaving them isolated and impotent in the "individualism" that Tocqueville predicted for us. And what of the third industrial revolution? What will it do to us? Science and technology, which originated in the desire of men to gain more power over their lives, seem instead to have left them as much or more in the grip of chance. It seems impossible to be sure that science is the friend of human freedom, but we are surely wedded to it, for good or ill, as a power of tremendous consequence in our lives whose future course we cannot foresee. Of our politics and economics, however, we should be more confident. They have served us well, and they have prevailed, so far, against the criticisms of our deep thinkers.

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Joseph S. Nye, Jr.: Remember July 1990? Saddam Hussein had not yet invaded Kuwait, and the Soviet Union had just agreed to the reunification of Germany. The leaders of the Group of Seven top industrial nations held their annual summit in Houston, and the papers were full of stories about the new German and Japanese superpowers. "The cold war is over," wags said, "and the Germans and the Japanese won."

A year later, the Group of Seven met in London, but there were no stories about new superpowers. Contrary to the declinist view that nothing works in the United States, the high-tech weapons and the military bureaucracy performed well in the Gulf War, and Mikhail Gorbachev, leader of a collapsing Soviet superpower, came to London to appeal for aid. The New York *Times* referred to the summit as "a rude lesson in how quickly the world balance can change." But the world balance does not change nearly as quickly as do the fads in how we look at it.

The end of the cold war has produced strange realignments in American politics and policy debates. Patrick J. Buchanan sounds like an early 70's Democrat in urging America to come home, and Edward N. Luttwak has joined Paul Kennedy in proclaiming America's decline. Luttwak tells us that "the totality of all the numbers contains irrefutable evidence," then admits that his straight-line extrapolations and use of current exchange rates (rather than purchasing-power parities) may be misleading. Indeed they are, along with his selection of anecdotes. If one compares only the bad in the present with the good in the past, it is child's play to show decline.

"Revivalists," to use the term Paul Kennedy

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applied to my book, *Bound To Lead*, are not blind optimists, but we think that the talk of American decline has gone too far. As I showed in that book, the declinists are right that the United States is not as dominant economically as it was during the middle of the century. Right after World War II, the United States accounted for nearly half of world production; today we represent about 23 percent. But the higher figure was due to the effects of the war, which strengthened the United States while it weakened everyone else. For the next three decades other countries recovered their health and the American share of world product returned to its prewar levels. Since the mid-1970's, however, the American share of world product has held stable. Moreover, if one uses purchasing-power parities, which correct the current exchange rate of currencies for what the money will buy in the local economy, our share both of world product and of the seven summit nations actually increased slightly in the 1980's. This is a far cry from Luttwak's comment that the path has been "straight downhill."

THIS does not mean the United States is free of problems. Some things are worrying. Not only do serious social problems like drug abuse and violent crime disrupt urban life, but important industrial sectors like consumer electronics and automobiles have slipped badly in market share. Household savings dropped from 7 percent in the 1970's to 4 percent in the 1980's, and the annual increase in our labor productivity, which averaged 2.7 percent in the 1950's and 60's, fell to 1.4 percent in the 1980's—and it is the increase in labor productivity that allows businesses to pay higher wages without an inflationary effect.

There is also good news. The overall economic growth rate of 2.6 percent per year over the past two decades is above our 2-percent long-term historical average. The U.S. share of industrial countries' manufactured exports dipped in the mid-1980's, but ended the decade at about the same 16-percent level at which it started. Contrary to fears that we were losing our industry, manufacturing slightly increased its contribution to the GNP, and productivity in manufacturing increased by a healthy 3.5 percent per year in the 1980's. The United States has a strong science-and-technology base, a deeply rooted entrepreneurial tradition, and well-developed capital markets. And contrary to conventional wisdom, public-opinion polls show that the American work ethic remains stronger than in many other industrial democracies. Luttwak may extol Europe, but as Robert L. Bartley shows, in terms of Schumpeter's picture of capitalism as "creative destruction," the United States and Japan are adapting to the revolutionary information-based economy better than is Europe.

Some people cite our debate over decline as a sign of sickness, and note that a strong person (or economy) does not worry about its health. But if concern about decline is proof of its presence, America has been finished since its start. The Founding Fathers were already worrying about decline in the 18th century. Anxiety returned with the closing of the frontiers in the 1890's, and more recently after the Soviet Union launched Sputnik in the 1950's.

Unlike our human bodies, nations are capable of rejuvenation or new starts. Britons who wrote about their country's decline after it lost the American colonies in 1783 did not anticipate the industrial revolution or the Victorian era. Similarly, someone looking at the greed, shortsightedness, and weak political leadership in the United States in the 1920's might wrongly have concluded that the country was in a long-term decline.

None of this is grounds for complacency. Unattended, the domestic problems described above will eat into our prosperity and strength like worms in the woodwork of a solid house. However, we have faced equal or larger problems in the past; and exaggeration of our current problems may foster inappropriate responses. The key to success will be to remain open to the outside world and adaptable to change. Social flexibility, class fluidity, and economic openness are American advantages compared to Europe and Japan. It would be ironic if fears of American decline or isolationist impulses led to policies of protectionism, resistance to foreign investment, and rejection of immigrants. Such responses would mean turning our backs on the characteristics that brought us where we are. Americans need to be confident, but not complacent, so that America's capacity continually to reinvent itself may again prove to be our hidden strength.

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Paul Craig Roberts: Edward N. Luttwak would have fared better in his exchange with Robert L. Bartley if he had emphasized more the ruination of our legal system, the difficulty of political leadership in a balkanized society, the demoralization of the workforce by employment privileges known as quotas, and our crazy policy of taxing capital. Instead, he relied on spurious income statistics, decline from an artificial post-World War II peak, and the shoddiness of our over-regulated public-transportation system. Nevertheless, I am also uncomfortable with Bartley's *tour de force*, which rightly stresses the problems we have overcome and notes that there will always be an abundance of decline in a dynamic society as group and sectoral hegemonies are undermined by change.

Not being himself an economist, Luttwak relies on the misleading statistics of establishment economists whose own decline would be a great

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boon to our welfare. Designed to bash Ronald Reagan and to encourage income and wealth redistribution, these statistics tell us nothing about our economic condition. They have hoodwinked Luttwak into believing that "the vast majority of all working Americans are earning less and less." I do not have the space here to display the full inventory of statistical tricks used to paint a false picture of the 1980's. However, Luttwak needs to know a few of the ways in which he has fallen victim.

He relies on non-farm, non-supervisory payrolls for his idea that incomes are declining. However, what he has found is one of those areas that are in decline while things are getting better elsewhere. Non-supervisory payrolls ignore the growing share of the workforce in higher-paying jobs requiring greater skills. In testimony on August 5, 1988, Janet L. Norwood, the commissioner of the Bureau of Labor Statistics, told Congress that jobs requiring little training are "not growing as fast as those that require a lot of training." Indeed, experts now acknowledge that the Reagan expansion created skilled jobs at a more rapid pace than our bureaucratized educational system could produce people to fill them, the result being a "skills gap."

Luttwak also needs to know that, due to a peculiarity in the consumer price index (CPI) that was not corrected until 1983, inflation-adjusted real-income data understate the real-income growth in historical comparisons by overadjusting for inflation. Social Security payroll data and Census Bureau median income data show impressive income gains during the 1980's. Economists like Paul Krugman and Benjamin Friedman hide this success by averaging it with the poor performance of the 1970's.

OPEN, dynamic societies fare better than societies run by a tight group of elites or by government planning. The tension in our society moves between two extremes. We have to maintain enough commonality to hold together, but not so much as to come under the sway of fossilized elites, who are forever tempted to turn an entrepreneurial society into one that pays rents to privileged and protected interests. Too much stability works against an entrepreneurial society. The bigger government grows and the more resistant to change society becomes, the more likely it is to decline.

Ronald Reagan, at least initially, opened things up, and upstarts and new wealth arose. Now reaction has set in, the economy is suffering, and new leadership is not apparent. In the 1990's the economy might not do as well as in the 1980's. This would give declinists a new lease on life. Established elites, of course, would be quick to turn an atmosphere of decline to their advantage by expanding the state at the expense of an opportunity society. Bartley's triumphant optimism, soundly based on real successes, could give way, as he realizes, to a society driven by neurotic fears to seek security at all costs.

I WOULD like to mention three other things that imperil our future, largely because they are seldom remarked upon or even noticed. In the past quarter-century our legal system has eroded in two ways that threaten our existence as a free society. One erosion stems from the development of status-based law by actions of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), the Department of Labor, and the federal judiciary, contrary to the clear statutory language and legislative history of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. For the sake of a higher cause, liberals winked at the law and instituted a "temporary" policy of racial, and now gender, quotas to jump-start integration. However, as law and history show, privileges are never temporary, and status-based employment and other privileges have become hereditary entitlements that undermine equality before the law. Moreover, these privileges are spreading. A status-based legal system, of course, is the antithesis of a free society.

The other danger to our legal system comes from the new aggressiveness of the state (dating perhaps from Robert Kennedy's pursuit of Jimmy Hoffa) in going after "white-collar" defendants, the aggressiveness of lawyers and judges in unleashing tort and civil liabilities, and the rise of unaccountable administrative law. Together these developments undermine our property rights and the protections our legal system provides against Star Chamber proceedings.

Our legal system is under attack in a variety of other ways as well. The basic legal principle that there can be no crime without intent has been undermined by: criminal indictments based on "novel theories" by the prosecutors; the criminalization of accidents, as in the Exxon *Valdez* case; the use of vague securities laws to indict Michael Milken and others; and the use of statistical disparities to prove discrimination regardless of intent. Oliver North's attorney, Brendan Sullivan, astonished a recent meeting of the Federalist Society when he revealed that Independent Counsel Lawrence Walsh subpoenaed him to testify against his own client before a grand jury. The extensive wetlands regulations have no statutory basis. And so forth.

Finally, there is the land mine at the very basis of Western thought. The philosopher Michael Polanyi argued that we will not understand the history of the 20th century until we can see it as the outcome of an inconsistency at the foundation of our intellectual frame of mind. The 18th-century Enlightenment had two results that combined to produce a destructive formula. On the one hand, Christian moral fervor was secularized, which produced demands for the moral perfection of society. On the other hand, modern science called into question the reality of moral motives. From the one we get moral indignation,

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and from the other, moral skepticism. These two disparate tendencies can be reconciled only by a joint attack on existing society. One focuses moral indignation against society, while the other preempts society's defenses.

I have never discovered anyone, other than myself, who has paid any attention to Polanyi's seminal insight. Formerly, liberals thought Polanyi was attacking their cherished Enlightenment, and they closed their ears. Today, it is merely routine to attack the Enlightenment, along with common decency and anything that sustains civilized life. What I have called the "denunciatory ethic" is the way we have come to demonstrate our moral independence from vested interests, and it presents great barriers to the affirmation of our civilization and its organizing principles.

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Irwin M. Stelzer: Game, set, and match to Robert L. Bartley. Indeed, so complete is his destruction of Edward N. Luttwak's declinist drivel that there is little one can add. But a few points are worth emphasizing.

Most important is Luttwak's confusion of relative with absolute decline. To prove that the United States is headed toward third-world poverty, its children unemployed or reduced to selling their bodies in Japanese whorehouses, Luttwak reels off statistics that he says show that "By 1980, the pattern of decline had already set in." Two problems. The first, as Bartley notes, is that Luttwak simply has no idea of how to make meaningful economic and statistical comparisons—or, worse, does know how, but chooses distortion instead. He cannot in the end answer the most basic question: if America is indeed such a disgusting, clapped-out country, why is it the country to which the world directs its capital, and which is the preferred destination of escapees from truly third-world countries from Haiti to Russia? Very few Americans seek permanent residence in Japan or Germany; ask any Japanese if he prefers a Tokyo suburb, with its miserably small houses, to Beverly Hills. (Bartley, by the way, did not have housing statistics handy. Here they are: newly built American houses average 2,000 square feet, new Japanese houses half that.)

The more fundamental problem is that Luttwak uses data relating to *relative* economic performance to support his assertion that America is in *absolute* decline. Immediately after claiming that "the pattern of decline ha[s] already set in," he cites data showing that other countries are closing the productivity gap. We continue to improve, but others improve even faster, says Luttwak. So we are somehow diminished by the rising prosperity of others! Luttwak is clearly aware of this problem with his argument. He slyly says that we will become a third-world country (whatever that is) "at least by Japanese standards" and that our economy is in severe decline "by world standards," thereby hinting, without quite saying, that his data refer to America's position *relative* to other nations. Even if true—and it is not true—such a relative decline hardly carries the dire consequences of an absolute decline. We can do very nicely even as others also improve their lot.

THESE technical problems with Luttwak's article pale into insignificance, however, when compared with the elitist diatribe against America lurking just below the surface of his screed. Luttwak compares the polite, white-gloved Japanese taxi driver with New York's "unkempt lout who resembles his counterparts in Islamabad or Kinshasa." The xenophobic Japanese, of course, have no immigrants they care to accommodate: their pursuit of racial purity is sufficiently savage to warm the cockles of David Duke's heart. America is, blessedly, different. True, it is irritating when a driver, recently arrived from Russia or Iran or Israel or Lebanon, cannot find Grand Central Station. But grin and bear it: his children, or at worst his children's children, will soon be contributing the skills and drive with which newcomers have traditionally enriched the American economy.

Indeed, Luttwak's entire account of travel from Tokyo's Narita airport to New York's Kennedy airport is a silly contrivance. Everyone knows that the infrastructure of the increasingly wormy Big Apple is not typical of the rest of the country. New York City is in particularly bad shape, sapped by liberal economic and social policies that are destroying its tax base. And its facilities are old. Fly to Orlando, Denver, or Phoenix, or even Chicago, and you get a different picture. True, the facilities are crowded relative to those of other countries. But that is because almost everyone in America can afford to fly. The American students who Luttwak says are doomed to stay in Europe's cheapest hotels regularly buzz around their own country to visit relatives, drink beer on the beaches, ski, or sample the cultural delights that are no longer found in only a few large cities. Fares here are a fraction of those in Europe and Asia, thanks to airline deregulation; they are the envy of the world's businessmen and tourists. Luttwak stands in line at American airports because others can afford to take equal places on that line—a phenomenon that intellectuals often find an offensive reminder that society does not accord them the deference to which they feel entitled. After all, few of the others in that line, and certainly none of the "unkempt louts" who maneuver their cabs to Luttwak's hotel, have ever published in COMMENTARY. How dare they jostle him, or decline to wear white gloves while schlepping his bags!

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One could raise dozens of additional problems with Luttwak's Complaint. It is highly unlikely that producers of HDTV receivers will, as he contends, "earn each year" what comes to $1,000 per television set; there is nothing wrong with preferring royalties to manufacturing profits or to sharing risks by entering into joint ventures with foreign firms; our economy is invigorated, not sapped, by the decline of its corporate behemoths and their replacement by small entrepreneurial competitors; and the availability of efficiently made, maintenance-free Japanese cars and consumer-electronics products has enriched, not impoverished, Americans whose real incomes rose steadily until Bush abandoned Reaganomics in favor of Darmanism and the Brady Bunch.

Now, the obligatory, balancing conclusion. None of this is to say that America is without problems. Luttwak is right to worry about police without power to cope with vagrants, and the anti-educational impact of a multiculturalism that now forces radio stations to stop identifying Washington's footballers as "Redskins." But he is wrong to think America is in decline, and dangerously wrong in his protectionist prescriptions for its reversal. Neither he nor Patrick J. Buchanan can lock out the world's goods and capital without producing the very decline in living standards that Luttwak says he fears.

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Jude Wanniski: My inclination is to agree with both Edward N. Luttwak that America is in decline and with Robert L. Bartley that it is in ascendance. On a graph that would cover the last 200 years, the trend line would climb for 175 years and fall for 25. On a graph that would cover the last 25 years, the trend line would fall for fifteen, but move up for the last ten, although the last two years have been weak. This downward blip coinciding with the Bush recession cannot be ignored. Unless it is corrected, the upward trend that Bartley really identifies with the Reagan years will be seen merely as an upward blip on the secular decline of America toward the third-world standing Luttwak anticipates. My guess is that this decline will be arrested in the relatively near term, and that America will head into the 21st century in a big way. The idea that the American Century is over and done with is not correct. The century was spent struggling against the obsolete forces of the Old World, a process now essentially complete. America's 21st century will be equivalent to Britain's 19th, the *Pax Americana* of an "American Empire."

Luttwak's arguments should be appreciated for trying to probe for chinks in the edifice of "America-is-the-greatest." His images of the almost-third-world experiences encountered by a traveler arriving at Kennedy airport and making his way to a Manhattan hotel ring true; the experience of "chronic disorganization of perfectly routine procedures" can be duplicated in many other instances of daily life. Yet that is hardly sufficient as a basis for his thesis of declinism, and his data regarding savings rates, productivity rates, income levels, etc. are skewed, inaccurate, and confused. He presents indications of American decline, but does not identify the dynamic at work that supposedly accounts for the slide. And his perspective is completely linear.

Bartley's rejoinder, while nicely exposing the declinists' straw man as a creation of their own anxieties, is a bit too mechanical, displaying almost boiler-plate optimism. In terms of recent trends, much of the bullish side of America's power is based on the victories scored by supply-siders and their allies in the Reagan years. Yet Reagan's "heir apparent" has been presiding over the dismantling of those victories, which Bartley presents as immutable. Just as we have to ponder the Coolidge Roaring 20's giving way to the Hoover Depression of the 30's, we have to consider the possibility that just as surely as Reagan was in Coolidge's lineage, Bush is in Hoover's. Bartley does not do so.

I am also unfavorably struck by Bartley's observation that "the onslaught of modernity has not been good for institutions such as the family." Is it "modernity" or simply the inflation of the last 25 years which, when combined with ever more onerous rates of taxation, battered and disrupted the stability of the American family? An American ascendance would have to see the repair of institutions such as the family, or I would doubt the ascendance.

MY OWN view is that the 20th century has been taken up with historic experiments in socialism and fascism, the latter being the elite, corporatist form of capitalism. In the process, the United States itself has been dragged through minor variants of both fascism and socialism. The former I identify most with Hoover and the early New Deal; the latter I identify with the later Roosevelt and the social agenda of liberal Democrats thereafter. The only economic theory consistent with entrepreneurial capitalism is supply-side theory, which dominated American history from its earliest days up to the Wall Street crash of 1929. The Keynesian fiscal model and Milton Friedman's monetarist model are both consumer-driven, redistributionist, and zero-sum. In a true American ascendance, the rising tide lifts all boats. John F. Kennedy was a supply-sider surrounded by Keynesians, but his contribution was important nevertheless. Ronald Reagan was a supply-sider surrounded by monetarists, and his achievements in overcoming them were among the most important of the century.

From here on, the ascendance of America should be increasingly apparent, however this year's presidential elections turn out. The infla-

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tion is behind us, as Reagan appointees to the Federal Reserve have been leading us back to a dollar as good as gold, at $350 an ounce. Society will once again tend to stabilize around a money that restores the links between effort and reward over long horizons. Traditional values which to Luttwak now seem beyond repair will once again knit together. The Democratic party, frustrated by the power of supply-side ideas, has finally abandoned its zero-sum redistributionist policy. The political competition in the elections remaining in this century will continue to regenerate the original American idea of entrepreneurial capitalism, and with it an America in ascendance.

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Ben J. Wattenberg: I leave it to others to comment in detail about Edward N. Luttwak's preposterous extrapolations of frequently preposterous economic data. On all that, Luttwak is only wrong. But his notion of the third-worldization of America is offensive.

Never mind that America is the number-one scientific, cultural, economic, linguistic, military, educational, political, and geopolitical power in the world, quite possibly the most influential nation in history, and, curiously for a nation that supposedly cannot compete, the world's largest exporter, and gaining. This is the nation that Luttwak describes as "Japan's Brazil."

According to Luttwak's elitist anecdotes and weird extrapolations, here we are, a third-world country, characterized by his archetypical New York taxi driver. That man, we are told, is an "unkempt lout who resembles his counterparts in Islamabad or Kinshasa rather than in London or Tokyo, where licensing requirements are strict and dress codes are enforced." (Right, America needs a few more licensing regulations.)

Tsk, tsk, says Luttwak. Just compare these hackers to the well-mannered cabdriver in Tokyo, "neatly dressed . . . in white gloves," or to similarly elegant ones in Zurich, Amsterdam, or Singapore.

Luttwak is right in this respect: America has never had much of a servant class. The Europeans and the Japanese beat us all to hell in white glovery, and that has troubled the international *elegantsia* for centuries. At various times in our history the unkempt loutish class in America consisted of Irish, Jews, and Italians. They were not servile; they did not wear white gloves; they did not defer to their betters. They were more interested in making a better life for themselves, and particularly for their children, who, as it turned out, did well here, changing America once again, and creating yet one more new world in the new world.

I wonder if Luttwak has ever talked to one of those unkempt louts behind the wheel. It's a hobby of mine. I ask about America, and count the number of sentences until the word "opportunity" occurs. Usually, it is in the first one, as in, "America is a tough country, but there is more opportunity here than anywhere."

I'm not sure I would want to be in the cab when Luttwak tells such a lout, who is working 70 hours a week in an entrepreneurial activity, that he exemplifies a "lack of diligence in the labor force." In the New York area some of the children of the louts are winning the State Regents scholarships that used to go to Jewish kids. On straight merit.

And one meets the same sorts of upwardly-mobile immigrants near some other airports in America that are rather unlike the grimness that Luttwak (somewhat accurately) lays upon Kennedy airport. Investment capital has been available to expand airports in Washington, Miami, Denver, Orlando, Boston, Los Angeles, Dallas-Fort Worth, Raleigh-Durham, Las Vegas, Phoenix, and O'Hare (to begin what could be a massive list), and often brilliantly.

I am trying to place Luttwak's screed about the third-worldization of America into the contemporary American political scene. Whom does he sound like? Where have I been hearing this stuff? The only name that registers is Patrick J. Buchanan's.

Since Luttwak's piece was written, the U.S. seems to have come out of a recession and Japan seems to be going into one. In his new role as the Grand Extrapolator, he might try running those trends out into the future. Is Japan becoming a third-world country?

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Buchanan and the Conservative Crackup

Norman Podhoretz

THERE is plenty of bad news about Patrick J. Buchanan's campaign for the Republican nomination for President in 1992, but the good news is that it has gone so badly with the voters.

This, of course, is not how that campaign has generally been seen. Up until the results of the Michigan and Illinois primaries on March 17, Buchanan was represented almost everywhere as a very successful protest candidate. Here, for example, is how *Time* magazine summed it all up:

> Buchanan has already bloodied Bush in a political cross fire that has preoccupied the Republican party and may help topple the President in November. Just three months ago, Buchanan was an acerbic television commentator; now, thanks to tough economic times and Bush's bumbling ways, Buchanan holds hostage many of the angry "swing" voters who are likely to pick the next President.

To be sure, this kind of fevered assessment gave way to a more sober appraisal after Super Tuesday (March 10), when Buchanan did much less well than expected, and especially after the Michigan and Illinois primaries a week later. Having once been given a chance to win in Michigan, Buchanan failed to get more than 25 percent of the vote there, and he did even worse (22 percent) in Illinois. Nevertheless, he was still being widely credited (again in the words of *Time*) with having "propelled himself . . . into the first tier of GOP hopefuls for 1996."

Yet a careful look at the primary results reveals that Buchanan actually performed poorly even when he was thought to have done well. In New Hampshire, where he campaigned long and hard, and where economic conditions and such other factors as the support of an important local paper presented him with an almost ideal opportunity, he drew 37 percent of the vote. Then in Georgia, where he also put out a great effort, he nearly matched that figure, with 36 percent. At first glance these results seem impressive, especially for a political novice challenging the President of the United States within his own party. But on closer examination the early primaries provide a measure not of Buchanan's strength but of Bush's weakness. Thus, on the same day that Buchanan's strenuous campaign in Georgia was being rewarded with a 36-percent vote, he got about 30 percent in Maryland, where he had not campaigned at all. And in South Dakota, where Buchanan was not even on the ballot, the same 30 percent of the Republican vote went to an uncommitted slate.

What all this suggests is that anyone—or no one—running against Bush would have been assured of that 30 percent. This inference is borne out by the exit polls, which showed that most of the people who voted for Buchanan did so because they wanted to "send a message" of dissatisfaction to Bush, not because they were for Buchanan himself.

If, then, Buchanan began with an assured anti-Bush base of 30 percent, it follows that the best he managed to do in his own right was to jack it up by six or seven points. Worse yet from his point of view, in many states besides Michigan and Illinois (Louisiana, Massachusetts, Mississippi, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Texas, Connecticut, Kansas, and Wisconsin), he went below the anti-Bush base, scoring as it were in negative numbers.

In short, we are entitled to conclude that Buchanan's appeal to Republican voters in general is very strictly limited. But what about his appeal to conservatives? It is here that the news gets bad—not perhaps as bad as it seemed before March 17, but bad enough to create a number of serious problems. And thereby hangs a tale.

WHEN word first began circulating last year that Buchanan was planning to run, it seemed reasonable to suppose that he would have trouble in picking up support from his fellow conservatives. Once upon a time, he had been much admired by conservatives of all stripes for the vigor and pungency with which he usually expressed the conservative consensus of the Reagan era. But more recently, with the end of the cold war and the departure of Ronald Reagan from the scene, he had been veering off in an entirely different direction in his thinking

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about international affairs. The most blatant manifestation of this change was his opposition to the Gulf War. Yet while the position he took on this issue surprised many people who still thought of him as the pugnacious hawk he had always been in the fight against Communism, it had already been foreshadowed by the loudly announced conversion to isolationism with which he had celebrated the victorious conclusion of that fight.

It was not, moreover, some vague or general brand of isolationism that this most ferocious of cold warriors had decided to embrace; it was a particular strain with a name and a history of its own: America First.

The purpose of the original America First movement, founded in 1940, was in the short run to oppose American aid to the nations of Europe threatened by Nazi Germany and in the longer run to keep the United States from going to war against Hitler. Although the movement attracted a number of prominent left-wing isolationists (among them the socialist leader Norman Thomas and the historian Charles A. Beard), its main support came from the Right and included the notorious anti-Semitic demagogue Father Charles Coughlin. But America First's most famous spokesman by far was the great aviation hero Charles Lindbergh.

"In September 1941," writes the historian Alonzo L. Hamby of Ohio University in the *American Enterprise*, "Lindbergh made a speech that listed Jews, the British, and the Roosevelt administration as the three forces propelling the country toward war." In doing so, furthermore, Lindbergh "made no reference to other ethnic groups (Polish-Americans, for example) who also favored war with Germany, and [he] seemed to assume that Jewish-Americans were in some sense or another aliens."

Now what was most extraordinary about Buchanan's insistence on using the name of the old America First movement was his willingness—or was it eagerness?—to embrace these unsavory aspects of its history as well. When Governor L. Douglas Wilder of Virginia, in search of a jazzy slogan for his own abortive campaign for the Democratic nomination, also and independently hit upon the term America First, he was clearly unaware of or had forgotten about these associations, and he dropped it as soon as they were called to his attention. Buchanan, by contrast, knew exactly what he was doing and even went out of his way to pluck on the original strings.

Indeed, he might almost have been consciously echoing Lindbergh when he announced on one of his television shows that the Israelis and the American Jews were the only forces pushing the Bush administration toward war in the Persian Gulf. Again like Lindbergh (who at least had the excuse of knowing that the country was split down the middle on getting into another European war), Buchanan ignored all the other groups, adding up to a large majority of the population, who backed Bush's policy; and yet again like Lindbergh, Buchanan insinuated that American Jews (Israel's "amen corner") were not full-fledged Americans. (As if to belie his apologists, who insisted that he had not meant to say what he seemed to be saying, he returned to the same theme during his campaign when he responded to a group of Jewish protesters by declaring that "This is a rally of Americans, by Americans, and for the good old U.S.A.")

Instead, then, of trying to distance himself from the anti-Semitic associations of the old America First movement, Buchanan moved with all due deliberation in the opposite direction. Even in the absence of all the other indications of anti-Semitism which Buchanan's critics have been able to cite,[1] this alone would have been enough to convict; and it certainly seemed likely to cost him support not only among the neoconservatives (many of whom were Jewish, and all of whom were pro-Israel) but also among such important Old-Right magazines as *National Review* and such New-Right institutions as the Heritage Foundation. After all, *National Review* had a long history of efforts to purge the conservative movement of the anti-Semitic sentiments to which it had once been hospitable, and Heritage, beyond being absolutely free of any anti-Semitic taint, was also strongly pro-Israel. Much the same was true of most other leading conservative groups and institutions.

Yet even if the complicating factors of anti-Semitism and hostility to Israel had not been present, Buchanan's isolationism would have provided sufficient reason for these conservative groups, all of which had supported the Gulf War and none of which had renounced interventionism, to oppose his candidacy. And even if they were not deterred by his conversion to isolationism, they would surely be put off by his correlative conversion to protectionism (which, being the economic face of isolationism, had also formed part of the program of the original America Firsters).

[1] See "Patrick J. Buchanan and the Jews," by Joshua Muravchik in the January 1991 COMMENTARY for a meticulous analysis of the evidence. Incidentally, Buchanan's generally soft attitude toward Hitler's Germany (as reflected in his tender solicitude for Nazi war criminals and his flirtation with Holocaust revisionism, both amply documented by Muravchik) is also reminiscent of Lindbergh. Though no more an actual Nazi sympathizer than Buchanan, Lindbergh was an admirer of Germany; and, writes Hamby, though "he deplored Nazi persecution of the Jews," he did so "in the manner of an advocate who prefers to downplay facts that damage his case [and] he was more prone to call it stupid than evil." But Lindbergh, unlike Buchanan, was writing before Nazi persecution of the Jews had reached the genocidal level it would eventually attain.

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On the other hand, there were some conservatives of whose backing Buchanan could be sure. There were his admirers at *Human Events*, a magazine in whose eyes he could say or do no wrong. There were the columnists Evans and Novak, who had sided with him on the Gulf War and were even more hostile to Israel than he was. And there were the so-called paleoconservatives, a group of *enragé* academics whose isolationist fervor predated his own and was if anything more extreme. The paleos were also fanatical nativists to whom immigration from anywhere except Western Europe (or perhaps only England) represented the greatest of all threats to the health and integrity of American society—a view Buchanan had himself increasingly come to embrace in recent years.

IN THE event, Buchanan did get the enthusiastic support of these elements of the conservative movement. Conversely, he provoked as much opposition from the neoconservatives as was predicted. But things did not go quite as expected among other conservatives who disagreed with his current political ideas. The most visible case in point was the flagship publication of American conservatism itself, *National Review*.

Under John O'Sullivan, who had succeeded William F. Buckley, Jr. as its editor, *National Review* (like Buckley himself) had on the whole remained true to the Reaganite faith. In fact, even before Buchanan announced his candidacy, the magazine had quietly decided to back an insurgency against Bush in 1992 on the ground that the President had betrayed Reaganite principles first in raising taxes and then by signing a civil-rights bill that was bound to promote quotas.

Obviously *National Review*'s preferred vehicle for such an insurgency was a genuine Reaganite like the present Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, Jack Kemp, or the former Secretary of Education, William J. Bennett. Neither man, however, was willing to run. Pat Buchanan, who was willing to run, claimed to be Reagan's heir but in his own way he had become at least as much an apostate as George Bush. Faced with this dilemma, O'Sullivan at first entertained the hope that if Buchanan could do well enough in New Hampshire, he might drive Bush to resign, just as Eugene McCarthy had done to Lyndon Johnson in 1968. Then, just as in 1968 Robert Kennedy had taken this new situation as a license to enter the race, so would Kemp or Bennett or some other Reaganite exploit the opening created by Buchanan to throw his hat into the ring.

On the basis of this fantasy, *National Review* was prepared to endorse Buchanan in spite of his isolationism, in spite of his protectionism, and in spite of his anti-Semitism—although O'Sullivan, while acknowledging that Buchanan was an isolationist and a protectionist, persistently denied that he was an anti-Semite. Unhappily for O'Sullivan, at that very moment Buckley was just completing a long essay for *National Review* in which he found it "impossible to defend Pat Buchanan against the charge that what he did and said during the period [of the Gulf crisis] amounted to anti-Semitism. . . ." But not even Buckley could convince O'Sullivan. On the contrary, O'Sullivan stuck so stubbornly to his guns that *he* convinced Buckley to join him in giving "tactical" support to Buchanan in New Hampshire.

So great was O'Sullivan's determination to endorse Buchanan in the early primaries that it survived the discrediting of his first rationalization and easily latched on to a second. Thus, no sooner had it become clear that Buchanan could not do unto Bush what Eugene McCarthy had done unto Lyndon Johnson than *National Review* decided that its purpose in endorsing Buchanan was not to drive Bush out but to drive him to the Right by sending him a message.

Never mind that the message being sent by this particular messenger was not the one *National Review* presumably wanted to send: somehow the right (in both senses of the word) message would get through. And sure enough, when Bush responded to Buchanan's attacks on him by forcing John Frohnmayer out as head of the National Endowment for the Arts and by apologizing for having broken his pledge not to raise taxes, *National Review* saw in these paltry concessions to the Right a sign that its "objectives in giving Pat Buchanan a qualified endorsement in the early primaries have been achieved to a degree far greater than we could have expected."

Nor was *National Review* alone among Reaganite conservatives in failing to oppose Buchanan with the forthrightness his apostasies—not to mention his anti-Semitism—might have been expected to demand of them. In private, many such conservatives had long been expressing their dismay over Buchanan's desertion of Reaganite principles; and a few who had known him for years had no hesitation in acknowledging that (for reasons they could not fathom) he had become anti-Semitic. In public, however, the statements of opposition from some leaders of conservative organizations within the Reaganite camp tended to be weak and ambiguous, rather like those of liberal Democrats talking about Jesse Jackson in 1988.

One reason these Reaganite conservatives (Paul Weyrich of the Free Congress Foundation, for example) were so inhibited in their criticisms of Buchanan was that they and their constituents had come to loathe George Bush and were in no mood to lend him aid and comfort by undermining his only challenger from the Right. Another reason was that Buchanan was apparently drawing a good deal of support from the conservative grass roots, and especially from the young activists of the movement. Consequently, as David Keene, the chairman of the American Conserva-

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tive Union (ACU), told the *Wall Street Journal*, "a lot of conservatives" were afraid to "stand up and speak out against Pat." (Was this why the evangelist Jerry Falwell, who had already decided to endorse Bush in 1992, later said that he would be "front-row center for Buchanan in 1996"?)[2]

BUT if there was indeed bad news about the Buchanan candidacy among conservatives, there was also some good news emanating from the same quarter.

Item: Not every leader of every conservative organization was intimidated by pressure from below. For example, the ACU's David Keene, while withholding support for Bush, opposed Buchanan from the outset for all the right reasons, and courageously held firm even after his board had voted to back Buchanan by a very large majority.

Item: Outside the organization world, a formidable collection of conservative political leaders, including William Bennett, Jack Kemp, Senator Phil Gramm, and Congressmen Vin Weber and Newt Gingrich, denounced Buchanan and made it their business to explain why—as an isolationist, a protectionist, a nativist—he had no claim to the Reaganite mantle. And Bennett for one, though denying that Buchanan was "personally" anti-Semitic, declared that he *was* "practicing political anti-Semitism."

Item: Among mass-circulation periodicals, the editorial page of the *Wall Street Journal*, perhaps the most influential exponent of Reaganite principles in the country, as well as its editor, Robert L. Bartley, made their opposition to Buchanan abundantly clear. So, in no uncertain terms, did Malcolm S. Forbes, Jr., editor-in-chief of *Forbes*, America's most widely read business magazine.

Item: In a letter to *National Review*, thirteen eminent conservative intellectuals—all non-Jewish[3]—expressed their dismay at the magazine's tactical endorsement of Buchanan, pointing out that "it was not morally consistent" for the editors to recommend voting for a candidate whom Buckley had charged with anti-Semitism. Then, when O'Sullivan reiterated his denial that Buchanan was an anti-Semite, Richard John Neuhaus, one of the signatories of the letter, published an editorial in his own magazine, *First Things*, which concluded with the following sharp retort:

> In recent decades, the line against anti-Semitism has been held by the conservative movement, by neoconservatives, by the Christian New Right, and by *National Review* under the leadership of William F. Buckley, Jr. That line of defense is now weakened by the attack of the Randolphites [a paleoconservative group in the Buchanan camp]—an attack inadvertently aided by the inept response of *National Review* to their candidate.[4]

Item: In addition to *First Things*, another important conservative journal of opinion, the *American Spectator*, came out strongly—and with no waffling on the issue of anti-Semitism—against Buchanan.

DESPITE these reassuring signs, however, the Buchanan candidacy, on balance and taken for all in all, has already done great harm. A "conservative crackup," as R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr. of the *American Spectator* was the first to call it, no doubt became inevitable once the end of the cold war had eliminated the great purpose that, more than any other factor, had brought so many disparate groups together into a working coalition. But there was nothing inevitable about the form this crackup would take. Indeed, if not for Buchanan's decision to throw in his lot with one of the darker strains of American conservatism and then to lift that tradition out of the obscurity to which Ronald Reagan had consigned it, things might have turned out very differently.

There might, for example, have been the kind of civil debate among the various schools of conservative thought for which John O'Sullivan now irenically pines. But what O'Sullivan forgets is that Pat Buchanan and his amen corner set out to make such a debate impossible. For their main objective has always been to recapture the conservative movement from those who in their view have stolen and corrupted it. Or as Buchanan once put it when he was still just a columnist: "Before true conservatives can ever take back the country, they are first going to have to take back their movement."

First and foremost among the elements from

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[2] Fred Barnes of the *New Republic* has reported that in a poll taken of his television audience by Pat Robertson, Falwell's fellow evangelist (and fellow Bush supporter), Buchanan beat the President 71-29. This does not necessarily mean, however, that the Christian Right is moving away from its fervent support of Israel. At a recent conference, there were people wearing "Buchanan for President" buttons on one lapel and "Hands Off Israel" buttons on the other.

[3] They were, in alphabetical order: Peter L. Berger, Walter Berns, Robert H. Bork, Terry Eastland, Patrick Glynn, Michael Joyce, Harvey C. Mansfield, Jr., Richard John Neuhaus, Michael Novak, James Nuechterlein, Thomas L. Pangle, R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr., and George Weigel.

[4] In singling out O'Sullivan for this criticism, Neuhaus was being too kind to Buckley. For after first doing himself honor by unambiguously calling Buchanan's anti-Semitic effusions by their proper name, Buckley, as noted above, now joined O'Sullivan in giving Buchanan "tactical" support—thereby inescapably suggesting that anti-Semitism was not in itself enough to disqualify a political candidate. To make matters worse, in his own reply to the protest letter from the thirteen conservatives, Buckley compounded both intellectual and moral confusion by claiming that in his original essay he had "communicated [his] own private guess that Buchanan is not anti-Semitic." Well, he had certainly not communicated this "guess" to the thirteen, or—offering my own private guess—to most other readers of his essay. The best one can say about this evasive action is that it brought Buckley's position into line with O'Sullivan's statement that "we would not have endorsed Mr. Buchanan if we had believed him to be anti-Semitic."

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whom the movement has to be taken back are the neoconservatives, of whom Buchanan wrote long before he became a candidate: "Like the fleas who conclude they are steering the dog, their relationship to the [conservative] movement has always been parasitical." Yet it is not only these "eleventh-hour arrivals in the Reagan coalition," these "JFK-LBJ Democrats disillusioned with the Great Society they helped erect," these "ideological vagrants [we brought] in off the street," on whom Buchanan and his claque have declared war. Even Buckley and *National Review* themselves have come under assault. Here, as an instance, is Murray Rothbard, president of the John Randolph Club, and one of Buchanan's most fervent champions:

> *National Review* is no longer the monopoly power center on the Right. . . . The original Right and all its heresies is back! In fact, Bill Buckley is the Mikhail Gorbachev of the conservative movement. . . . For Pat Buchanan's race for the presidency has changed the face of the right wing. . . . He has created a new radical, or Hard Right, very much like the original Right before *National Review*. . . . The right wing shall henceforth only be defined in relation to the Buchananite movement. That movement, neither kind nor gentle, now sets the agenda, and sets the terms of the debate.

Is Rothbard right? In the immediate aftermath of New Hampshire, it looked as though he might be. But with the gradual emergence of a strong conservative resistance to Buchanan, the announcement of his victory in the struggle over who will lead and define American conservatism now seems a bit premature.

Yet it is also true that by seizing the opportunity to launch a conservative insurgency against George Bush when none of his Reaganite rivals was willing to step in, Buchanan at one stroke catapulted himself into the forefront. As Burton Yale Pines of the Heritage Foundation told the Washington *Post*:

> I don't think that Jack Kemp or Bill Bennett or [former Delaware Governor] Pete du Pont ever imagined there would be a conservative leader ahead of them. Suddenly here's Pat Buchanan who has visibility, who has networks in key states, who has money sources in key states. . . . Every day that [Buchanan is] in the race, he makes gains among conservatives and he emerges as the titular leader of the conservative movement.

Unlike many of his colleagues at Heritage, Pines has been distressingly indulgent toward Buchanan. But if his assessment is correct, and if Buchanan succeeds in actually becoming the leader of the conservative movement, disaster will follow. Having been carried triumphantly into the mainstream by Ronald Reagan, the conservative movement will have been dragged back into a marginal sectarian status with very little appeal to anyone outside its own fever swamps.

But it is important to recognize that such a development would not be a disaster for conservatism alone; it would be a calamity for the whole country—as destructive in its way as the obverse radicalization of liberalism turned out to be in the late 60's. The surrender then of so many liberals to the perspective of the New Left resulted in the corruption of a healthy political tradition. It also facilitated the entry into the political mainstream of formerly marginal ideas and attitudes which have contributed mightily to the undermining of the family, the spread of a dangerous sexual licentiousness, the slow deterioration of our educational system, and the epidemic of drugs and violent street crime. If the "new radical or Hard Right" coalition forming behind Buchanan were to achieve a comparable success, American conservatism would undergo a comparable process of corruption—a process that would release into the political air the viruses of xenophobia and nativism, and the derivative diseases of anti-Semitism and old-fashioned racism, to which the movement had seemed for a time to have acquired immunity.

Which is why the bad news about the Buchanan candidacy is not bad news just for conservatives, and why the fight now beginning for the soul of the conservative movement matters so much for everyone else as well.

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In Memoriam: Lucy S. Dawidowicz

Neal Kozodoy

"BEING an American was itself enough to give anyone a bushelful of courage."

Thus, the late historian Lucy S. Dawidowicz (whose name is enduringly associated with this magazine) contemplating at a remove of five decades the inner impulse which in 1938 had led her, a girl of twenty-three, on a year's flight out from the freedom and safety of America into the heart of East European Jewry, a human civilization already then being readied for the rack and soon by human will to be smashed from the earth, obliterated in blood and soot. To be a young American in those days was to feel sheltered, impervious, consequently full of defiance and bravado. In this condition there was, as she would later acknowledge, much danger, the danger of falling victim to the very dangers (societal evil, frenzy, corruption) of which Americans in their impetuousness tended to be dismissive, or simply ignorant; but there was true, heavenly favor as well, and purity and fortune and strength, energetic gifts out of the political and social constitution of the United States which in her later adult life Mrs. Dawidowicz would never forget, or fail to act upon in gratitude.

In particular she would not fail to repay with courage the legacy of courage which being an American had freely conferred upon her. That courage was hers, it was her distinguishing and sometimes lonely mark, plain in the path she chose as a student of the darkened past, and also in the role she would play, irreplaceably, as a public intellectual, speaking with a historian's consciousness and a polemicist's heat to controversies of the moment. In the realm of thought and judgment Lucy Dawidowicz, who died in December 1990 at the age of seventy-five, was a tough woman, and in her bold American and in her stubborn Jewish way, the more faithfully she performed the duties of thought and judgment the more indomitable she grew.

2.

"THE terrible finality of the murder of the European Jews and their disappearance from history darken our memories and cloud our vision of the past."

Mrs. Dawidowicz's magnum opus, *The War Against the Jews 1933-1945* (1975, tenth-anniversary edition 1985), and its companion volume, *A Holocaust Reader* (1976), were products of an overriding sense of obligation and compulsion—obligation to her murdered kin, the Jews of Europe; compulsion to set down a record already seen by her as slipping away in forgetfulness and selective distortion. Probably nothing less than obligation and compulsion, sparkers of courage, would have sufficed to bring someone of her sensibility—someone, that is, who took Jewish history personally—through the endless nausea of research which the writing of these books inescapably required. Sickening, she would report in despair to friends, was the ordeal of immersing herself in, of vicariously experiencing, the facts themselves, the foul implacable detail of legislation and enactment, of roundup, sequestration, plunder, and pogrom, of transport, enslavement, denudation, torture, beating, shooting, starvation, gas. Sickening, too, was the burden of confronting and then of explicating the vertiginous Fact itself, a human assault without recourse and without letup, and bearing, for the assailants, an urgency beyond any calculation of expedience, reason, or opportunity. Sickening and soul-crushing, finally, was the already-to-be-glimpsed prospect, hatefully realized in due course, of having for the rest of her life and with ceaseless grim vigilance to "defend" both facts and Fact against a succession of ingenious efforts, by the disreputable and even by the reputable, to deny, revise, or suborn them.

Then there was, and still is, something else again, something prior, and something interior: the sickening awareness, never to be blinked, of "terrible finality," of everything which with the *success* of Hitler's war against the European Jews, and with their "disappearance from history," had become, for Mrs. Dawidowicz as for the Jewish

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people itself, irreparable and irretrievable, and, full in the face of the most desperate need for some kind of inward and eventually even outward reconciliation, irreconcilable.

BEFORE she set herself to record the death of the European Jews, Mrs. Dawidowicz had, in fact, retrieved a part of the irretrievable. Her *The Golden Tradition* (1967), a large anthology of individual memoirs and personal documents, introduced by a historical essay of 90 closely-printed pages, is a teeming capsule of Jewish *life* in Eastern Europe, from the end of the 18th century until the edge of destruction in 1939. "Something to conjure with, what this small people has done!," marvels an excited native of Vitebsk named Marc Chagall in a passage reprinted in this entrancing, heartbreaking volume. Heartbreaking, for the contemporary reader, is of course the inevitable awareness of encroaching cataclysmic destruction; but heartbreaking as well is the recognition, gradually borne in by these subtle, humane, combative writings, of how much of what "this small people" had done was, long before the hour of physical extinction, already being undone, from within and from without.

As to the undoing from within, a very long and many-sided story, that was never Mrs. Dawidowicz's proper subject, although she touched on at least one central aspect of it both in her books and in essays on the historically enfeebled nature of Jewish political reflexes. In any case, traces of its workings are everywhere evident in *The Golden Tradition*. The marveling Chagall supplies a hint of some of the elements at play in this process of internal debilitation as, immediately following his eager apostrophe—"Something to conjure with, what this small people has done!"—he explains without irony what he means: "When it wished, it brought forth Christ and Christianity. When it wanted, it produced Marx and socialism." What, one may wonder, has happened, here, to the antique and wholly unconcessive pride of the Jews in themselves, in the abundant sufficiencies of their own creed? What has happened to that powerful assurance and reserve which—whatever else may be said of or even against it—for so long dignified their historical existence, spurred their genius, inured them to the blandishments of hostile, variant, or supersessive faiths? It has been corroded by the salts of modernity—the very same salts now pungently flavoring the meats which many like Chagall, and many more who lacked Chagall's saving affections, were hungering, too understandably, to feed upon.

To Mrs. Dawidowicz, nevertheless, it was always an error, if not indeed a species of moral dereliction, to focus overmuch on the appetites, or the manners, of the would-be banqueters, when the doors of the great hall were being slammed and locked upon them even as they were preparing to sit down to table. It was the slammers she was after. By the same token, she had no use for the ranks of second-guessers who grew up in the decades after the successful completion of the war against the Jews, latter-day critics who with greater or lesser subtlety, and only sometimes with honorable intent, would effectively pin upon the murdered Jews and their contemporaries and forebears an indictment of historical blindness, cowardice, even complicity.

Whether the ostensible occasion was an inquiry into the (allegedly irresponsible) communal organization of Jewry in pre-Hitler Europe, or into the (allegedly collaborative) behavior of certain ghetto leaders during the war itself, or into the (allegedly pusillanimous) response of Jews in America to the news of the Holocaust, she for her part categorically repudiated the charge of collective passivity, let alone of collusion. The irrefutable point, she demonstrated again and again, was that just as the trapped and encircled European Jews had been innocent of provoking, so they were powerless to repeal, the total, unrelenting fury loosed upon them. During the war the point, for someone like her, had been to commit every moral and spiritual resource to the Allied effort to defeat the fury by dint of countervailing arms. After the war, the point (for her) was not only to understand the fury but to render upon it a definitive historical judgment—and in this way, for the victims, to raise up a memorial.

The judgment rendered by *The War Against the Jews* rests on a fully argued thesis—namely, that the Nazi enterprise as a whole was not just furthered, it was *defined*, by the war against the Jews, that for Hitler racial ideology, i.e., the intention to destroy every last Jew, was an end in itself, on a par with his more "conventional" aims, over which, indeed, in the latter stages of World War II it came to assume a terrifying, metaphysical priority. The thesis was consciously framed as a counter to a then more customary view of Hitler's anti-Semitism as an instrumental rather than an essential element of Nazi doctrine and deed; and this alone guaranteed that, even as many would be persuaded by her argument and embrace it, others would find reason to resist it. There also would emerge a second point of contention, having to do with the unyielding emphasis which Mrs. Dawidowicz, in common now with other traditional historians of the period, placed on the role of human agency and personal will, as opposed to impersonal historical or institutional "forces," in the execution of Nazi ideas.

The ensuing debate over these (inevitably) twinned matters was partly a debate among professional historians, and as such a debate—between "intentionalists," of whom Mrs. Dawidowicz is spectacularly one, versus "functionalists" of various stripes and allegiances—it continues to this day. In one way or another, it forms the subject of many of the essays Mrs. Dawidowicz published in COMMENTARY and elsewhere over the years, just

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as it did of her scrupulous and indispensable book, *The Holocaust and the Historians* (1981). But as a reader of these works quickly grasps, for everyone concerned the debate, touching as it does on the issue of human responsibility for human history, carries with it a charge of the profoundest political and moral import.

She was, truly, obsessed with the memory of the dead—or rather, with the memory of the living who had disappeared, not only from the earth but from the history books, our designated preservers of memory. "For if," she wrote wrenchingly, "they are not recorded in history, the events of the past vanish into memorylessness, irretrievably lost to the present and the future." And to the prospect of vanishment by which she confessed herself "haunted" was added the even more outrageous specter of banishment: of a past not so much ignored as twisted and falsified by "revisionists," of a people not overlooked but perjured and once again cast out. Through the project of establishing a true and faithful record of the living and the dead, through the project of guarding that record from distortion and defilement, Lucy Dawidowicz meant to assume her own, activist share of responsibility for Jewish history.

BEING activist, this responsibility could not halt at the borders of a correct apprehension of the past alone. Times changed, and in the course of things old enemies gave way to new, while old alliances proved to be founded on illusion on one side, bad faith on the other; the Jewish disposition required, even if it did not always welcome, an understanding of the present in which the past's dark lessons might guide without paralyzing, might serve as a warning without acting as a stumbling block. Uniquely placed to provide that sometimes unwelcome understanding, Lucy Dawidowicz in the last ten years of her life added the role of political to that of historical conscience.

If in that role she never shrank from the task of rethinking old affinities in the light of present political reality, perhaps unexpectedly she also did not shrink from the task, emotionally even more costly, of rethinking old enmities, including the one which for many contemporary Jews has been the most sustaining enmity of all.

In his mournful and magisterial essay, "Jews and Germans" (COMMENTARY, November 1966), the great scholar Gershom Scholem undertook retrospectively to locate and diagnose the "false start," the canker, which from the moment of its birth had infected the modern German-Jewish civic arrangement, a fabled "symbiosis" of which Scholem himself was, gloriously, a late product but whose deadly fruits he had repudiated personally as early as the 1920's in the name of Jewish national self-respect and regeneration (that is, in the name of Zionism). His sorrowing, pitiless analysis, sparing neither Gentile nor Jew, concludes on a guardedly wistful note: "Only by remembering a past that we will never completely master can we generate new hope in the resumption of communication between Germans and Jews, and in the reconciliation of those who have been separated."

For her own part, Lucy Dawidowicz was not German- but American-born, and as a Jew she was a child of Eastern, not Western, Europe. Anyway, even though memory was her business, mourning was not her style. Where enemies were concerned, her style was to curse. After her return home from Eastern Europe in 1939, what had seen her through the war years in New York was guilt, rage, and a thirst for personal vengeance—already in 1940 she was confiding to her best friend a fantasy of getting back over to the European theater to find the beloved companions she had left behind ("If I get killed, OK. If not, I shall probably never come home and just wander Europe looking for [Zelig] Kalmanovitch and Chaim Grade")—and 50 years later these emotions remained vivid enough in memory to keep many pages of her 1989 memoir, *From That Place and Time*, at a boil of execration. In 1986 she wrote her own magisterial essay of retrospective meditation, and it opens, typically, by recalling the vindictive pleasure she took when, in Berlin right after the end of the war, she was privileged to behold the "felicific vistas of burned-out hulks of buildings, tottering skeletons of houses, the shards and rubble to which the Third Reich had been reduced." "I liked," she reports with satisfaction of the Germans she encountered then, "to watch them scrounge and scramble for cast-off American cigarette butts."

Yet "In Berlin Again" (COMMENTARY, August 1986), occasioned by another return visit 40 years later to the Nazi capital, turns out, perhaps surprisingly, to be itself an essay of reconciliation, and in Scholem's complicated sense if not by his route. Informing it is a deep if unspoken acknowledgment: that the curse wherewith any Jew was entitled, and more than entitled, to curse the German nation to eternal hell was finally inadequate, and in any case a puny thing next to the savage, annihilating curse which the German nation had preemptively laid upon the Jews of Europe, when it met their desire for acceptance with a thundering rescission and then marked them out as *worthy* candidates for extinction. This shattering judgment, which even after the war thoroughly blighted the spirit of many who yet remained in life, was what lingered on from the "terrible finality" of the Holocaust. It had seeped into the Jewish marrow, withering confidence and the possibility of contentment, instilling doubt, anxiety, skepticism, exhaustion, dread—even in that mighty enterprise of liberation and self-assertion that was the state of Israel. It had become a form of ineradicable knowledge, it made up the forces that "darken our memories and cloud our

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vision of the past," retroactively casting a pall over whatever had been green and generous in that past itself, engulfing every bygone moment of hope and enthusiasm in the black aura of certain betrayal and doom.

Only time, much time, would dispel some of the effects—on Jews, but also on Germans—of this long-acting poison, itself injected in the twinkling of an eye; time, and the courage to look straight not only into the unmastered past (Scholem) but into the present. The duty was incumbent upon all, although not everyone was willing to perform it. In *The Golden Tradition* and *The War Against the Jews* Lucy Dawidowicz had undertaken to master the past by recalling it with austere and patient honesty. She wrote those books in service to historical truth, and as tributes to the memory of the murdered European Jews; in the event, they proved of service to Germans as well.

There was no denying that after the war Germans at times seemed merely embarrassed, to the point of tedium, by their unmastered past; at other times they appeared almost swaggeringly stricken by it, regaling with their shame and guilt a world they had formerly stunned with their viciousness; at still other times, among some few of them, they seemed positively nostalgic. Yet all the while, Mrs. Dawidowicz reports in "In Berlin Again," deep changes were taking place in German politics and in German society that required acknowledgment, especially by one whose own decades-long rage against "the Germany that had turned Europe into a vast Jewish necropolis" had been unremitting. "In Berlin Again," a work of transcendent Jewish selflessness and objectivity, documents those changes.

General and preeminent were the establishment and institutionalization in West Germany of a stable political democracy which—despite recrudescences of extremist nationalism, militarism, racism, and anti-Semitism—had by the mid-1980's become *the* German reality. But equally significant was an evident and specific determination of Germans no longer to dodge but rather to come to grips with their historical relation to the Jews, to learn and openly to teach not only the history of the Holocaust—now being presented, Mrs. Dawidowicz was gratified to learn at an exhibit she attended in the old Reichstag, as a German "war against the Jews"—but also the history of the Jewish people and of Jewish civilization. Through the promise held out by this self-imposed program of moral reparation, in which her own intellectual contribution had been formative, Mrs. Dawidowicz glimpsed the possibility, never of putting aside or of surmounting the murder of the European Jews, for that was an event that existed forever in the "timeless present," an event "forever lodged in history's throat," but rather of relinquishing at long last the disabling torture that was the accursed memory of Nazi Germany, an entire edifice of institutions, deeds, and attitudes which, except for the murder of the European Jews, and notwithstanding contemporary instances in Germany itself of unregenerate hatred, had left, she now permitted herself to say, "no lasting heritage." This is what she had come to Berlin to see, and, having seen it, found the courage to say she was reconciled.

FIDELITY, then, to the life and death of the European Jews was one thing, a national and religious duty. Obsession with their Nazi murderers was another. It threatened to turn into a fascination; worse, it threatened to become a political investment, requiring, and justifying, ever fresher infusions of capital in the form of discovered Nazi-like perils to the Jews of today; worse yet, it encouraged an avid search for those perils in politically ambiguous or even innocuous places (like, in America, among Christian fundamentalists) while truly malignant growths elsewhere went scanted or ignored. Among contemporary Jews afflicted with this species of misplaced zeal, Mrs. Dawidowicz discerned the workings of a merely self-protective fixation with the past; there was also a desire not to confront present reality, a will to deny, byproducts (in part) of the fact that most Jews, most American Jews, being on and of the liberal Left—and how much more so, Jewish professors and Jewish intellectuals and spokesmen for the organized Jewish community—were constitutionally all but incapable of acknowledging danger from any direction but the Right, or of registering new opportunity anywhere but on the Left. For Lucy Dawidowicz, whose own voyage away from the Left can be documented in a number of essays stemming from the 1970's and 80's, all this represented blindness and unaffordable luxury.

As part of her responsibility to history she aimed to be alert, and to alert others, to the assault upon the Jewish people emanating in these particular decades from the international Left, its proprietors and its paid and unpaid agents in the Soviet Union, in Europe, at the United Nations, among the Arabs, in precincts dominated or influenced by black and third-world radicals in the United States. She had an integrated agenda here, since frequently the same sources involved in constructing and disseminating lies about the dead Jews of yesterday were among the major defamers of the living Jews of today; by the weird logic of politics, the interests of the two parties had coalesced grotesquely in 1975 when the United Nations, in its "Zionism-racism" resolution, erased the memory of the Jews as victims of Nazism and recast them indelibly as Nazis themselves. Less theatrical but more insidious was the widespread acceptance of ideas like these within the universities, the media, the churches, not to mention the reflex habit of blaming the Jews themselves—as yesterday the Jews of Europe, to-

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day the Jews of Israel—for the depravity of their enemies. And this was a habit, she had occasion to observe, infecting even some of Israel's putative friends, too many of whom proved ready in moments of emergency to stand by helplessly in postures of sentimental regret, or fastidious equivocation, or anxious and irresolute despair. On these subjects, on the diseased nature of these attitudes, her own perfect lucidity sounded a rallying tocsin.

3.

"THE reward of being Jewish lies in defining oneself, not in being defined."

These words, at first rather strange (for who are the Jews if not history's most defined people, and what is Judaism if not one of the world's most highly defined faiths?), sum up a credo. In writing them, Lucy Dawidowicz was polemicizing against the notion of Jewish existence as a matter only of fate, or of reaction. Such an idea, to which the sheer comprehensive antagonism documented in her own writings may inadvertently be thought to lend support, she entirely rejected; it offered, she wrote, "the torment [of being Jewish] without the gift, the infliction without the reward." And if the reward, which in her own life she both seized and extended to others, lay in defining oneself, the gift lay "in possessing one's own heritage and in affirming one's existence on one's own ground." Rather than a mere existentialist assertion, her statement reflects a supported historical judgment, a considered attachment to the majesty and inner freedom of Jewish experience quite independent of the massiveness of the forces historically arrayed against it, and a principled position with regard to the Jewish future.

In her writings about the Nazi period this judgment informed her repeated insistence on the, despite everything, amazing phenomenon of Jewish resistance, the sometimes ordinary, sometimes heroic, sometimes petty, sometimes selfless refusal of individual Jews and of whole Jewish communities to bow to the edict that doomed them, their iron determination to make out of suffering an occasion (as she wrote about the Warsaw Ghetto) of "solidarity and self-help, of succor and self-sacrifice." The principle of self-definition also shaped her approach to a radically different subject, that of American Jewry, a realm of historical experience which had been developing according to its own original lights and laws but which, precisely because of American society's bedrock condition of freedom, offered, she thought, still untold possibilities of Jewish cultural expression and creativity. ("At home in America," she observed in sentences that epitomize the steely but unapologetically championing tone of the major history of American Jewry she was preparing to write at the time of her death, "Jews are in every respect still in the process of learning to live in a pluralist society and to balance their Jewish identity with their Americanness. The drama of their three-centuries-old balancing act is a fascinating, even an inspiring, one.") And the same affirming idea similarly animated all her efforts to preserve through her writings the gift and the reward of Jewishness for future generations.

As an American intellectual and as a Jew, Lucy Dawidowicz made her own way, at her own pace; by temperament she was no joiner. Although in her last years she would come to be identified, and wholeheartedly to identify herself, as a neoconservative in politics, she arrived at this position only after an unrushable sifting of its implications. Nor, though she had written for COMMENTARY for decades, did she particularly think of herself, again until her last decade and then again with perfect pride, as a comrade-in-arms of the "COMMENTARY crowd." Which "crowds" she did belong to was a matter of her own idiosyncratic selectivity, though, roughly speaking, in at least one relevant division within the Jewish community and among its spokesmen, her lot was decidedly with the "survivalists" and the "particularists" as against the "assimilationists" and the "universalists." More interestingly, though born into a secular family—she did not set foot in a synagogue before her early twenties—though steeped in secular Yiddish culture, and though married to a militantly secular Bundist, she became a practitioner of Judaism, keeping a kosher home, attending synagogue, associating herself (in however critical or sometimes even captious a way) with the dictates, the rhythms, the impulses of Jewish religious life. Her love of Zion was, of course, complete.

As she grew older she grew more worried, and became more of a public activist, not a natural or comfortable role. At one point in the mid-1980's she made strenuous efforts over a period of many months to form a committee of Jewish intellectuals, academics, and other sympathetic public figures in order to oppose the anti-Israel (and anti-American) drift in American liberal opinion, including in liberal Jewish opinion; although in the end the organizational effort faltered, the issue continued to preoccupy her writing and her public speaking, and her conversation. As she could be a formidable scold and field marshal, many was the consequent public act performed by others that owed its inspiration and/or its execution to her mobilizing will.

More suited to her temperament was another initiative of those years, the Fund for the Translation of Jewish Literature. This project, whose first priority was the publication in English of some of the masterpieces of Yiddish letters, represented a return to the positive work of retrieval and transmission she had embarked upon decades earlier in *The Golden Tradition*. Into it she threw unre-

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mitting energy, single-handedly drafting the urgent statements ("What we do not retrieve and reclaim now may be permanently lost"), raising the money, forming the organization, inspiriting the editors and translators, and in general holding out a standard of discipline and excellence whose fruits can be assessed in the volumes already published in the Library of Yiddish Classics, and in those yet to come. Through these, at any rate, she meant at once to claim and to proffer the gift of the Jewish heritage, the reward of Jewish existence.

4.

"I AM probably the shortest person who has ever stood on this stage, and that includes any thirteen-year-old violin prodigy."

With this crack, delivered in the venerable concert hall of the 92nd Street Y in New York, she opened her 1984 State of World Jewry Address (published in COMMENTARY, February 1985, as "Politics, the Jews, and the '84 Election"). Short she was, and trim only in calf and ankle, and, though touchy about many things, about these quick to laugh. Dogged, too, and blunt, and with her friends, as we may attest, sharp-tongued where for charity's sake she might have made do with euphemism or the even safer refuge of negligence or indifference. Until the very end Lucy had force and will power to burn, some of it vented on the exacting work of character analysis, that is, gossip and the improvement of our several deficiencies. For those she loved, advice was freely forthcoming whether solicited or not, and the rigor of her expectations fell upon us like a goad. She had a historian's memory for our failings, the record of our misdeeds, the unfulfilled charter of our promise; she had a writer's impulse to stipulate them. At the same time, no one whom she loved ever knew a more ardent or more loyal fan.

She liked to keep her personal accounts as square as her checkbook, which was very square indeed. She was full of judgment, and if her moral categorizings were sometimes a little loose—her highest compliment was "*edel*," refined, her favorite terms of dismissal a riff on "vulgar" that could take in "disgusting" and "repulsive" on the way downward—they compensated often enough in general accuracy for what in particular cases they may have lacked in nuance. It is possible that she was too preoccupied with the sadness of history, which amounted to the hard incontrovertible truths of conflict and oppression, and that she was herself too deeply scarred by historical knowledge, to be patient with some of the less exigent sorrows of everyday lives, the tears that are in things, the normal waywardnesses and delinquencies of normal hearts. She was capable, though, of hilarity, together with a certain innocent cynicism toward those too ostentatiously on the side of "life," especially if they also happened to sleep on pillows of money, health, security. She mistrusted the *sentiment* of nobility.

And she was a devotee of grace, an enthusiast of spectacle, a pursuer of transcendence: in her youth an acolyte of Keats, in her maturity she was mad for music, particularly grand opera, the grander the better, and with the pianist Menahem Pressler of her adored Beaux Arts Trio she formed a spiritually sustaining mutual-admiration society. Her exuberance for the New York Mets, especially in the person of their sometime captain and first baseman, Keith Hernandez, was improbably romantic and infectious. Through these means and through others she made her necessary escapes from history, into realms untouchable by marauding time or by that passion for nullification against which she had commanded herself, with every ounce of mind and heart at her disposal, to stand.

Her husband Szymon, a brand plucked from the fire of the Nazi war against the Jews, she fiercely loved and protected, and when he died of stomach cancer in 1979 she wrote in a private letter to friends about the vigil of his final months. She had kept a historian's record, day by day, a separate sheet for each day, meticulously searching for patterns, for coherence, for the meaning that would rescue from darkness: a record of his illness and its course, of his inexorable wasting, of the fight he waged to remain alert and articulate, of his medical treatment and its effects, of the purées she cooked and what he ate of them or failed to eat, of, finally, a frailty so complete that the doctors were unable even to find his "poor tiny veins." He died, as they both wished, at home; he was her responsibility.

Lucy mistrusted mere ideas, mere spirit; it was, she thought, rightly, the letter that giveth life. In her own life and in her writings she kept the letters, and gave *them* life, and therefore the everlasting spirit within them.

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1492 and All That

Richard Ryan

FOUR-HUNDRED-NINETY-NINE years after Christopher Columbus collided with the New World on his way to Asia, the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. commemorated the event with the opening of its mammoth "Circa 1492: Art in the Age of Exploration."* For three months this show, which featured the art of five continents dating from roughly the time of Columbus's voyages, played to capacity crowds and enthusiastic critics. Full-page advertisements sporting acclamatory blurbs ran in newspapers around the country; the usual cottage industry of calendars and gift cards was quickly in evidence.

Such promotional activity was by no means unprecedented for a staging of this size; the lamentable "King Tut" exhibit of the mid-70's, which had such a vulgarizing effect on museum curatorship, set the standard. But unlike the "King Tut" exhibit, which served only to elevate a marginal historical figure to the level of a pop icon, "Circa 1492" did shoulder a bundle of critically divisive issues—cultural integrity, historical legitimacy, the ethics and aesthetics of power—before stumbling under the weight.

The main obstacle now confronting any American institution which attempts a comparison of diverse societies is, of course, multiculturalism, the theory that all cultures are morally equivalent and should be treated equally. Given its global scope, "Circa 1492" could scarcely ignore the positions advanced by the multiculturalists, but neither, within the current restraints on politically-acceptable debate, could it address those positions honestly. The low road ultimately taken by the National Gallery seems to have been the only route permitted to its curators, who abandoned the makings of an important exhibit on their way to safety.

THE most direct evidence of the show's failure was its pedestrian arrangement. "Circa 1492" divided itself into three broad geographic categories, reflecting the global alignments which prevailed at the start of the Age of Exploration. In the opening section, "Europe and the Mediterranean World," viewers drank in chamber after chamber of 15th- and 16th-century masterpieces, which were in turn organized thematically. One room, for instance, presented an intelligently conceived demonstration of the developing power of representation through perspective. This creation of modern pictorial space—the space of Galileo as much as of Leonardo—was linked with the interrelated technical arts of engineering and architecture, as well as (in another room) the rapidly developing field of cartography.

Within these first rooms viewers also met Europe's original cultural antagonists: the nations of Islam, represented by both Moorish and Ottoman art; and the world of Africa, which Portuguese explorers had already begun to subjugate by the time of Columbus. Next, in "Toward Cathay" (the second section), viewers were invited to take an imaginary journey through the great dynastic kingdoms of Japan, Korea, China, and finally India, before moving, in "The Americas," to the art of our own hemisphere.

These broad geographic divisions, however, were not ultimately useful in thinking about point-by-point differences among cultures—of the kind, for instance, that would have been forced upon visitors if Florentine and Aztec sculpture had been placed side by side. Nor did the layout help in considering what the effect of exploration might have been on individual societies. Moreover, by presenting the geographical sequence chronologically, as it would have been experienced by successive generations of European explorers—and in this sense, despite its cultural egalitarianism, "Circa 1492" was unmistakably Eurocentric—the exhibit raised questions that it could not or would not answer.

Were the superior artistic resources of Europe directly related to the political and technological skills that made its eventual world domination possible? The art suggested as much. Indeed, the most disorienting (pun intended) aspect of "Circa

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1492" may have been the sheer impact of the European masterpieces. Some of these works figuratively conquered the viewer, and were virtual exhibits unto themselves.

Most notable of the show-stoppers was the much-publicized Leonardo, *Portrait of a Lady with an Ermine (Cecilia Gallerani)*, an exquisite portrait from about 1490 depicting the young mistress of Leonardo's patron, Duke Ludovico Sforza of Milan. The painting, arguably the finest of Leonardo's three surviving female portraits, and never before seen in the United States, is a remarkable fusion of painterly technique, anatomical precision, optical invention, and psychological sensitivity. There is so much here to engage the viewer: the mysterious detachment of Cecilia's expression, her novel three-quarter pose which extrudes the painting's inner space, the torsion of the embosomed ermine with its aura of sexual energy. Insight, wit, and eroticism all spill off the canvas surface.

Because it was placed at the focal point of a room devoted exclusively to the works of da Vinci and Dürer, which was in turn the last room of the "European" section, the Leonardo portrait itself seemed like a triumphant summation of the cultural abilities of Europe in the era of its creation. The room also contained Leonardo's *Vitruvian Man*—the multilimbed figure inscribed within a circle which has become an icon of Renaissance humanism—and other examples of the Italian's unparalleled draftsmanship: his anatomical drawings, his schematics for machines of war, his late, apocalyptic deluge drawings. Matched with the equally impressive Dürers, they embody the cultural vitality of Europe at that moment in human history.

Of course, the remaining continents had ample numbers of great works in evidence. Two of the Oriental hanging scrolls displayed in "Toward Cathay"—the 16th-century Ming *Portrait of the Hongzhi Emperor* and the 15th-century Japanese *Layman Yuima*—were particularly spectacular examples of non-Western pictorial skills, and deserve extended treatment on their own merits. Here they may be mentioned briefly by way of contrast with the Leonardo.

The first of these two fine pieces, an anonymous, posthumous depiction of the emperor Zhu Youtang, has a majestic completeness to it, but like so much of the non-European portraiture in the Asian section of the show it is too obviously the product of a culture in which social status overrode individual identity. The emperor Zhu Youtang, in his resplendent yellow robes with a dragon-bearing folding screen as a backdrop, is more the glowing embodiment of his office than an actual historical figure. Bunsei's ink portrait of the philosopher Yuima, on the other hand, is marvelously intimate, a beautiful rendition of aging wisdom, in which the furrows of Yuima's brow and the delicate folds of his robe are emblems of the sage's sensibility. The Bunsei painting lacks nothing in expressive power, and yet it fails to convey what so many of the European works in "Circa 1492" declare: the confidence of a culture whose intellectual energies are increasingly turned toward a technical mastery of the physical world.

We know, however, that East Asia was plentifully supplied with scientific genius throughout our Renaissance. In Korea, for example, where movable type had produced hundreds of volumes long before Gutenberg, the newly-founded Choson dynasty would commission a series of world maps at the beginning of the 15th century. Those projects, represented at the National Gallery by the startling Kangnido map of 1402, included moderately accurate representations of Africa and Europe (based perhaps on Persian transmissions through China). This unifying global picture was created a century before cartography and geometry became indispensable elements in the repertoire of enlightened Italian intellectuals.

Yet "Circa 1492" failed to explain what became of the technical mastery on display in "Toward Cathay." Why did the Choson dynasty survive 500 years but never surpass its own medievalism? Paul Kennedy broached the topic of East Asian stagnation directly in his *Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*; he suggested, as many scholars have, that the conservative Confucian oligarchy in China dominated and retarded the entire region. This is a plausible hypothesis, and given the current state of Chinese affairs might have been worth illustrating, but again, such illustration would have dragged the National Gallery into the messy business of passing value judgments on other cultures. Ming xenophobia is off-limits, apparently.

And so we come face to face with the issue which "Circa 1492" insisted on skirting.

No one who has thought much about the topic of multiculturalism can fail to notice the apparent moderation in many of its basic propositions (although that is the appeal of most varieties of radicalism). In some sense or under certain circumstances, multiculturalism might mean no more than "humanism"—i.e., the proposition that all human activity, no matter what its cultural domain, is worthy of investigation. Or, again, multiculturalism might mean nothing more than the claim that we should pay attention to previously neglected works of art and literature, especially as these are found among the dispossessed, subjugated, and colonized classes, races, and nationalities.

But these humane and plausible directives are not what multiculturalism contents itself with promoting. In the flesh, multiculturalism means

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much more, and much worse, than "merely" humanism, or "merely" an enlightened reevaluation of the neglected self-expression of oppressed groups. It means, rather, the compelled attention of all educated people to these works and, more importantly, the suspension of value-grounded criticism before them. You are not permitted to prefer Henry James to Zora Neale Thurston, or Wagner to Hopi rain chants, at least not without being told that your judgment reflects cultural bias rather than qualitative insight. You are not even allowed to regard such works as "overlooked," since the term implies a certain innocent vagary of critical history. Instead, you must concede—so the multiculturalists insist—that these works have been deliberately repressed, a situation which their champions now mean to redress. Multiculturalism, in short, stands for a forced redistribution of intellectual capital, and its appearance marks the beginning of what will certainly be an extended campaign for cultural affirmative action.

If that is the theory, to what degree did "Circa 1492" put it into practice? Consider the pronouncements of J. Carter Brown, the departing director of the National Gallery, who narrated the Acoustiguide tour of the exhibit. In the room devoted to Africa, Brown asked visitors to stop in front of a bronze female head from the kingdom of Benin (modern Nigeria). This happened to be a representation of the "Queen Mother," the mother of the Oba, or absolute monarch of Beninese society; the woman's impassive face stares out from under a lofty woven headdress, with an elegant, hoop-encircled neck rising to support the whole structure. Of it Brown sighed: "This head is for me one of the most beautiful bronzes in the world." One has to hope, for his sake, that he did not mean this. I found it impossible to imagine by what standard this overly stylized ("somewhat abstract," Brown admitted) and psychologically empty image could be projected into the stratosphere of world sculpture.

On the other hand, I was quite impressed by the case of West African ivory carvings featured in the same room. These artifacts, produced in the early 16th century for export to Europe, represent a style that has come to be known as Afro-Portuguese. A variety of horns, saltcellars, and dining utensils illustrated the imaginative responses of skilled West African carvers to the sudden demand in Europe for their handiwork. Not that the pieces on display in any way disguised their primitive social origins: one particularly intricate saltcellar was ornamented with crocodiles and crowned with the figurine of a warrior holding an ax, a collection of severed heads before him and his next victim kneeling at his feet.

What is remarkable in the Afro-Portuguese pieces is how European taste and the African imagination met to create works which are radical, unsettling, and completely original. Their rhythmically patterned surfaces and echoes of tribal life must have made them a wonderfully ironic presence on Lisbon mantles and in Florentine dining rooms. They are (and I use the term in the full richness of its implications) jazzy. The fact that these works were so popular in Europe—one early-15th-century description mentions the "very clever men of Sierra Leone" who "make extremely beautiful objects"—indicates that the Europeans who acquired them took seriously both the skills and humanity of their craftsmen.

Nevertheless, at least some critics seem to feel that the Afro-Portuguese products require apologies, no doubt because their mixed character strips them of a fully African authenticity, and hence makes them unlikely candidates for multicultural affirmative action. Thus, Ezio Bassani, who contributed the chapter on West African art to the "Circa 1492" catalogue, though allowing that "[e]lements native to the two cultures are harmoniously blended in these works," also asserts defensively that "the ultimate proof that the *origins* of these works is connected to local artistic traditions lies in the stylistic characteristics that . . . do not presuppose European contact" (emphasis added).

Now, there should be no paradox in thinking that the generative impulse behind the ivories lay both in West Africa *and* in Portugal; that is part of the nature of the cultural cross-fertilization which the Age of Exploration commenced. But the concept of assimilation is necessarily so distasteful to multiculturalists that sometimes its obvious presence is willfully ignored. The dependably erratic Garry Wills demonstrated this when he reviewed the "Circa 1492" exhibit (as well as a number of new volumes on Columbus) in the *New York Review of Books*. Rhapsodizing on the beauty of a beaded Taino Indian belt, he proclaimed that it gives the lie to Columbus's description of the Tainos as "naked." Wills apparently did not bother to look closely at the work, or to inspect its catalogue entry. If he had, he would have noticed the inset glass beads and mirrors, which clearly mark the belt as a post-conquest product. An object that Wills thinks wonderfully recaptures the forgotten pre-Columbian abilities of the Taino Indians in fact shows how quickly they were able to assimilate Western offerings.

Which was equal to how quickly Europeans assimilated the offerings of the native Caribbeans, both linguistic—the words "canoe," "tobacco," "barbecue," and "maize" are European derivatives of Arawak words, and so, incidentally, is "cannibal"—and agrarian. Above all, the cultivation of tobacco and coffee, as Fernand Braudel and others have demonstrated, would have the most pro-

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found effect on European economies and cultures.

But treating these dynamics of assimilation with any comprehensiveness would have launched "Circa 1492" toward the very end the National Gallery appears to have wanted to avoid: a round of full-blown cultural comparisons. For to meditate on even the formal results of assimilation is to invite arguments about the ethical and political character of colonized societies prior to their absorption.

Consider for a moment the American section of the show. The focal point of the Aztec room was a "colossal rattlesnake head," a fanged temple guardian from Mexico-Tenochtitlán, the Aztec capital. This stupendous sculpture has none of the playfulness of Gothic gargoyles—it is all business, as it were, and that business is obviously to advertise the lethal majesty of the Aztec theocracy. The unknown artisan has captured, in his hundreds of pounds of basalt, the deeply aestheticized sadism of his culture.

Equally grisly images pervade European art, to be sure, but every time we see a crucifix (for instance) we are brushing up against the tragic, not the ecstatic. Even in those instances where the violence of the European imagination is unreconstituted—as in the Spanish armor I shall discuss shortly—it is counterbalanced by expressions of the redemptive and contemplative qualities of that same imagination. By contrast, the massive rattlesnake head seemed perfectly thematic of the Aztec room in "Circa 1492," as thematic as the arrays of sacrificial knives which had cut the beating hearts from uncounted victims. How could these implements not overshadow the charming carneolite grasshopper, porphyry pumpkin, and other sculptured evidence of the Aztecs' sensitivity to the natural world?

That sensitivity, though real, was peripheral to the Aztec death cult. There is nothing elemental or organic about a skull with knives stuck in the mouth and nasal cavities, despite the catalogue's claim that this artifact reflects how "[i]n pre-Hispanic Mexico, death and life were united in a constant cycle that man observed in nature." Such lame attempts to recast the Aztecs' year-'round orgies of human sacrifice as a kind of wistful naturalism sidestep the pathology of the culture; it is part of the ghastly genius of Aztec art that it *transmits* its own pathology, transmits its horror and its beauty all at once. One could easily see, in the National Gallery's Mexican room, why the Aztecs' neighbors should have aligned themselves with Cortez's campaign to topple Montezuma's empire.

OR PERHAPS one could not; there were, to repeat, no obvious conclusions the National Gallery's curators did not struggle valiantly to overlook. Their dereliction becomes clearer when one sees how other museums have handled the same themes.

One of the smaller shows staged around the United States in conjunction with the Columbus quincentennial was "Resplendence of the Spanish Monarchy," a stunning exhibit which ran at the Metropolitan Museum in New York this past winter.* Seemingly modest by the "mega-show" standards of "Circa 1492," it was without question a superior act of curatorship. Focused, elegant, original, aesthetically moving, historically revealing, "Resplendence of the Spanish Monarchy" was everything a "period" show should be. I cannot imagine anyone concerned with the period of exploration who would not understand it better for having seen this exhibit.

For what is important to grasp about the early European engagement with Africa and the Americas was its emphatically Iberian nature. That is to say, many of its outstanding characteristics should be understood specifically as reflections of the history of Spain and Portugal in the 15th and 16th centuries. And that the Spanish court of this period was overwhelmingly martial in its self-conception and self-expression was thoroughly borne out by the show at the Metropolitan. By limiting the show to the most aristocratic of artifacts—it contained only tapestries and armor—the curators of "Resplendence" managed to transmit the soul of Iberian imperialism in the Golden Age.

That soul was forged in the crucible of *la Reconquista*, the centuries-old European effort to retake Iberia from the Moors. By the time the last Islamic stronghold fell to the armies of Ferdinand and Isabella in 1492, the crusade to repossess the peninsula had become a mythic element in Spanish consciousness, linking national destiny to struggles of the classical world. So testifies *The Battle of Zama*, a spectacular tapestry woven in Brussels in the 1540's for Charles I's sister, Mary of Hungary. Its trumpeting animals and bristling legions depict the defeat of Hannibal's elephants by the Roman infantry of Scipio. The routing of a North African foe would have had unmistakable resonances for any Renaissance hidalgo, and if Charles was less focused than his grandfather Ferdinand on seizing the Maghreb, still he and his noblemen would have looked on this work with a sense of identification. The unadulterated violence of the piece—in the foreground amid hand-to-hand combatants a Roman soldier is seen biting a fallen enemy's face—would seem a commonplace of life to the merciless invaders of the New World.

The focused intensity of Iberian military obses-

* The catalogue is available as *Resplendence of the Spanish Monarchy: Renaissance Tapestries and Armor from the Patrimonio Nacional*, by Antonio Domínguez Ortiz, Concha Herrero Carretero, and José A. Godoy. The Metropolitan Museum of Art/Abrams, 172 pp., $39.50.

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sions did not prevent the Spanish and the Portuguese courts from firmly locating their conquests in the more general frame of Renaissance cosmology. Europe's exploratory vision was beautifully illuminated in the Metropolitan show by three hangings from a series called simply "The Spheres." Commissioned by the Portuguese court in about 1520, and woven in Brussels from designs attributed to Bernaert van Orley, these magnificent tapestries cross the spiritual with the spatial. One shows Hercules bearing the weight of the rounded heavens; the second portrays Atlas stooped under a finely organized armillary sphere. But it is the third piece in the series which is the most astonishing; in it, figures of Jupiter and Juno, surrounded and lofted by spirits of the air, flank a terrestrial sphere which is suspended by nothing but its own radiance. The upper border of the work bears a Latin inscription which translates: "Glory is supreme, for it issues from itself alone."

The celestial couple in this tapestry are in all likelihood an idealized representation of John III of Portugal (1521-57) and his wife, Catherine of Austria. The richly textured globe which floats between them has turned to present the viewer with the continent of Africa, dotted with Portuguese conquests. When linked to the more classical compositions portraying Hercules and Atlas, this momentous identification of Portuguese exploration with the new, self-sustaining order of the universe is an allegory of the most dazzling audacity. It leaves no question that Europe's geopolitical successes in this era were linked directly to its reinvention of visual and intellectual space.

As for the armor in the Metropolitan show, it was uniformly beautiful, and a few pieces were something more than beautiful. One parade burgonet, a ceremonial open-faced helmet made for Charles I, bears on its crown the embossed torso of a captive Turk. The prisoner is bound face up, his hands tied behind his arched back, each end of his braided mustache held by a winged Nike. It is a weirdly homoerotic image which suggests the work of a 16th-century Mapplethorpe, and strikingly captures (if that word is not too arch) the perverser elements of European imperialism.

The sadomasochistic helmet, the cluttered, gothic tapestries depicting scenes from the book of Revelation, the emphasis throughout the exhibit on warfare and violence—while I cannot call these manifestations of Iberian aggression healthy, I would note that the works in this show reveal a warrior society that understood its own character and had no desire to repress that understanding. No doubt this self-knowledge contributed to its military and cultural successes, and made the Spanish Golden Age possible.

Moreover, the barbarities condoned by Iberian imperial consciousness—and one must include here the cruelties inflicted on Jews and Moors throughout the peninsula as well as the massacres visited on the natives of the Americas—differ from the savagery of West African or Mexican culture; not in ethical repugnance, but in intellectual context. Iberian militarism was driven by an evolving vision not only of cosmology but of human affairs. In that vision, the state was increasingly seen as the guarantor of social and economic rights. To the warrior-bureaucrats of the burgeoning Hapsburg empire into which Spain would merge, military conquest would come to be identified with the protective duties of the state toward its citizens. The glory of the monarchy—let alone the blood-lust of the heavens—would gradually fade as a *casus belli*, displaced by the awesome duties and prerogatives of the state. In this sense the rise of modern governance can be prefigured in the iconography of the Iberian Renaissance. To the extent that Spain would fail to stay abreast of that development, it would be responsible for its own decline.

It is a pity, given the importance of this visual history, that "Resplendence of the Spanish Monarchy" failed to get the attention it deserved, especially since a spectrum of critical instincts, from neo-Aristotelian to post-deconstructionist, would have found subjects there for meditation. Although there can be no substitute for seeing the giant wall hangings in person, we are fortunate that Abrams has issued a catalogue which has reproduced the tapestries so beautifully. (I should also mention that the handsome and massive catalogue for "Circa 1492," though marred by some of the same political biases as the exhibit, includes many valuable notes and essays, and is far more substantive than the show it commemorates.)

During the Age of Exploration the world became, in an odd conceptual sense, more transparent. Suddenly it was possible for men to see through great distances of time and space, to see into other cultures, to see into themselves. Whether we are speaking of Leonardo's cutaway views of the human body or Francesco Roselli's world maps, what is before us is the technology of organizing visual information. This technology's purpose was intellectual mastery of the physical world, and its dimensions—scientific, metaphysical, military—had moral aspects which still remain under debate.

Some (but only some) of those aspects were reflected in the person of Christopher Columbus himself. The Genoese mariner was one of the great technicians of his age—a man who brought the maritime craft to new levels of accomplishment. His lifelong refusal to abandon the notion that he had discovered a route to Cathay was part of his larger intellectual limitations, the vestigial medievalism which seemed to cramp his entire

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career. None of those limitations is at issue, however; Columbus, like his royal Spanish patrons, was propelled by greater forces than he understood. It is surely wrong to say, as Daniel Boorstin does in the introduction to the "Circa 1492" catalogue, that Columbus's life was "international, collaborative, and progressive." It is certainly right to say that his legacy was.

Obviously, no one man or one event can make the moral significance of the past concrete. Indeed, the full value of the past is embodied only in some given present moment; it is within a particular present that the morality of the past is reborn as something actual. This is what it means to have a heritage. Denouncing the morals of the Age of Exploration, or contesting what-might-have-been—if, say, Pope Alexander VI had shared our liberal views of a universal human nature—is ultimately a kind of rear-view utopianism, a fantasizing obsession with the false. It is enough to say that in 1492 intellectual and social energies overtook Europe which would permanently alter civic evolution, and make the continent's outward explosion inevitable.

Despite the glint of Spanish armor, the ongoing Westernization of the world has been a progressive epoch, as the multiculturalists above all should appreciate. Their methodology, after all, is only the most recent variation on the tradition of Western humanism, a tradition which is now attempting to gather every society on earth into its camp. With the collapse of the Soviet empire, the global saturation of humanist science, art, and culture is beginning to look at least like a possibility. Not that such a triumph could quiet the multiculturalists, who will scarcely be consoled by the possibility that people from all continents can now look at Leonardo's *Portrait of a Lady with an Ermine* and claim it as their common heritage. Still, it is in the spirit of Leonardo that the peaceful conquest of the world by Western ideas will occur, if it finally does.

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"The People's Poet"

Joseph Epstein

> The Poet is a heroic figure belonging to all ages; whom all ages possess, when once he is produced, whom the newest age as the oldest may produce—and will produce, always when Nature pleases. Let Nature send a Hero-soul; in no age is it other than possible that he may be shaped into a Poet.
>
> —Thomas Carlyle

PASSAGES like my epigraph probably go a long way toward suggesting that Carlyle was more than a little nuts. Who, in our day, would search among poets for a hero? With only a few exceptions, poets in our time have found a home in the university, where they are rather dim figures, permitted to work at their craft, not so much an ornament to the culture as something closer to a parasite upon it, living from grant to grant, workshop to workshop, involved in an intense relationship with the Self, that all-consuming locust of our age, which chomps up all before it. Such, usually without rhyme and often without reason, has increasingly become the obscure habitat and vocation of the poet at the end of the 20th century.

To find an American poet who received public adulation worthy of the kind of heroism described by Carlyle, one must go as far back as 1878. The poet born in that year was not T.S. Eliot, for some a hero of culture, or Robert Frost, who late in life had an unusually wide public following, but Carl Sandburg, a poet not so much forgotten as scarcely any longer read. Whether Sandburg was truly a poet is itself nowadays in doubt. That in his day he enjoyed the fame accorded to a hero is not.

Carl Sandburg is the only American poet ever asked to address Congress, a date he was able to fit into his crowded schedule in 1959. He also appeared on the *Ed Sullivan Show*, the *Texaco Hour* (with Milton Berle), the early *Today Show* (with Dave Garroway), and *See It Now*, where he was interviewed by Edward R. Murrow. Sandburg once wrote a poem to which, on television, Gene Kelly danced. The house in which he was born was preserved as a memorial to him while he was still alive, and inside its front door hung—no doubt hangs still—a tribute from Stephen Vincent Benét; in part, ungrammatically, it reads: "A great American, we have just reason to be proud that he has lived and written in our time."

Perhaps no poet—or literary man generally—was more gaudily praised in his lifetime than Carl Sandburg. About the first volume of Sandburg's autobiography the playwright Robert Sherwood observed that it was the greatest work of its kind ever written by an American, "not forgetting Benjamin Franklin, nor Henry Adams, nor showing them disrespect." In a book about Sandburg, Harry Golden (of *Only in America* fame) noted: "It is not exaggerated to say you would learn more about the industrialization of America reading Sandburg's poems than you would learn about Elizabeth's England reading Shakespeare's plays." The British novelist and political journalist Rebecca West compared him to Robert Burns as "a national poet." The American socialist leader Eugene V. Debs said that he was "one of the very few really great poets of our day, and the future will know him to the remotest generation." Many years later the television commentator Eric Sevareid remarked: "I want to say that Carl is the strongest and most enduring force in American letters today." Taken all in all, not a bad little set of blurbs.

Sandburg also enjoyed the kind of fame in his lifetime which, among American writers, perhaps only Mark Twain and Ernest Hemingway had in theirs, and Sandburg's was probably greater. Like theirs, his was not a coterie fame, or fame limited to a university readership. For many years Sandburg was perhaps the most frequently read living writer in American high schools. He was often called "the People's Poet." *Playboy* once paid him $3,600 for six poems and a parable. ("It was fun," Sandburg is said to have remarked, "to be read by the most gustatory audience of readers in America, all of them definitely opposed to artificial insemination.") He also got large fees for poetry published in the *Woman's Home Companion*, *Collier's*, the *Saturday Evening Post*, and even *Fortune*. Hollywood, which had earlier paid him more than $100,000 to write a novel from which it hoped to make a movie—the project did not work out—hired him once more to work on the

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screenplay for Fulton Oursler's *The Greatest Story Ever Told*. Sandburg's reputation was large enough for Westbrook Pegler, the New York columnist, to attack him on a number of occasions, usually referring to him as "the proletarian millionaire." For a poet, this was big-time stuff—fame on the show-biz standard.

Sandburg seemed to sustain his reputation, however, only as long as he lived. Once he died (in 1967) it went down faster than the Hindenburg. Today, put the name Sandburg on one of E.D. Hirsch's cultural-literacy tests and, my guess is, the response it would elicit would overwhelmingly be, "Second-baseman, Chicago Cubs." Of course in his last years there were already signs of his future loss of popularity, one of them being that he did not even make Dwight Macdonald's 1960 anthology of parodies—he, poet of the most parodiable of all modern poetic styles. Perhaps a parody of Carl Sandburg would have been considered too easy, which, as I shall try to demonstrate, it certainly is:

Hot bitcher for the Gnarled,
Fool Shaker, Shackler of Feet,
Flayer with Male Toads and the Nation's
  Fright Hondler;
Horny, Busty, Stalling,
City of the Low Rollers.

Sandburg himself was not altogether ignorant of the vicissitudes of reputation. "Fame is a figment of a pigment," he once wrote. "It comes and goes. It changes with every generation. There never were two fames alike. One fame is precious and luminous; another is a bubble of a bauble." And so it was with his fame: the poet in whose honor a day was declared in North Carolina, who received the Albert Einstein Award from Yeshiva University, who had schools and real-estate developments named for him in Chicago, who was given God knows how many honorary degrees from Harvard on down, who won two Pulitzer Prizes (one for the first volumes of his biography of Abraham Lincoln in 1940 and one for his *Collected Poems* in 1951), who was actually regarded as a possible Republican presidential candidate to run in 1940 against Franklin D. Roosevelt, then seeking his third term—the reputation of this same poet is today in a condition he himself called "complete fadeout," with, I should guess, very little chance of revival.

How did Carl Sandburg achieve, sustain, and lose fame so completely? For anyone interested in the history of reputation, his case presents a fascinating chapter.

On the subject of Sandburg's ascent, we now have a detailed account in *Carl Sandburg*, by Penelope Niven.* The book is very much in the contemporary mode of epic biography—epic in this context meaning nearly endless. If in architecture less can be more, in biography more not infrequently turns out to be less. Miss Niven's book, the result of years of work in a vast Sandburg archive, is another case in point.

Hesketh Pearson, the English biographer, once wrote that "the majority of reliable biographies are unreadable, and the majority of readable biographies are unreliable." I cannot call Miss Niven's biography unreadable, since I seem to have read it; nor am I prepared to say that it is unreliable, since an enormous amount of research has clearly gone into its making. The insurmountable problem with the book is that it is altogether too uncritical of, and insufficiently distanced from, its subject. Miss Niven is all panting admiration for Sandburg, and everything about and connected with him. She is to Carl Sandburg as Carl Sandburg was to Abraham Lincoln. But Sandburg, it will surprise no one to learn, was no Lincoln.

Miss Niven's unstinting admiration leads her to take Sandburg at his own high self-valuation, which further leads her to assume that everything about his life is important, which in its turn leads to an unseemly quantity of gushing on her part. "His poems," she writes, "read in chronology and context, are a man's autobiography, a nation's autobiography." Miss Niven goes on and on about Sandburg's "fiery oratory," his "biting news columns," his "orator's ear for cadence and dramatic effect which led him closer to discovery of his inner, poetic voice." It is all more than a bit of a muchness.

The one thing to be said for biographies on the gargantuan scale is that they do supply an impressive pile of facts out of which a more critical reader may derive his own, often quite discrepant picture of the subject. Such at any rate is my debt to Miss Niven, and I hope I shall be forgiven for putting her diligence to my own very different purposes.

Carl Sandburg was a child of the same Midwest with which his name would be associated throughout his adult life, and remains associated to this day. He was born in Galesburg, Illinois, to immigrant parents, Swedes, in less than easy circumstances. His father was a blacksmith's helper on the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad; his mother had been a hotel maid. He was his parents' second child, the first son of seven children, two of whom died of diphtheria in the winter of 1892. His was not an easy youth, being brought up in Galesburg, a town in which the local chapter of the Women's Christian Temperance Movement was prominent, and in a household dominated by a stern father whose unrelieved dourness could have landed him a walk-on part in an Ingmar Bergman movie.

The Sandburgs lived close to the bone. Buying a house in Galesburg, August Sandburg had entered into a bad mortgage, and his ill luck was compounded by the panic of 1893. There was not

* Scribner's, 843 pp., $35.00.

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enough money for Carl to go to high school. Instead he was needed to work—he had a newspaper route, later delivered milk for a dairy—to bring in money for the household. He continued his reading with the help of his older sister, who was permitted to finish high school in the hope that she would become a teacher, as she eventually did. In an attempt to Americanize his name, Sandburg called himself Charlie. When he later decided to write poetry, his father is supposed to have asked, "Iss dere any money in diss poetry business, Sholly?" It turned out that, properly worked, there was quite a bit.

Sandburg first saw Chicago, traveling on his father's railroad pass, when he was eighteen. It blew him away. It also set him on the road. Not long after, he rode the rails to Kansas, where, as a hobo, he worked the wheat fields. (The distinction among tramps, hobos, and bums was that tramps wandered but did not work, hobos wandered and worked, and bums neither wandered nor worked.) From his days among tramps and hobos, Sandburg acquired the rudiments of his lifelong socialism, which was of the turn-of-the-century, peculiarly American strain, more populist and sentimental than Communist. This period also gave him his first inkling that he might one day be a writer. Coincidentally, it was during these same years, the 1890's, that Jack London, too, lived as a tramp, extracting much material for his novels and stories. As a training for writers, traveling about the country on the cheap was no bad form of education, better, surely, than graduate school.

Sandburg would eventually go to college, back in Galesburg, but first he joined up for, though he did not fight in, the Spanish-American War, a conflict that produced more casualties from disease than from battle. As a veteran, he could attend Lombard College tuition-free, which he did while working at the Galesburg fire department. His family had meanwhile come up in the world, thanks chiefly to his father's having bought another house, this one large enough to rent out portions to tenants. Charlie—he had not yet returned to the name Carl—was a great figure in college: a serious student, a basketball star, a member of the debating society, editor of the school paper. He had fallen under the influence of a mildly polymathic professor named Philip Green Wright, who was himself, Miss Niven reports, something of a William Morris socialist. Sandburg had also begun reading Charles Lamb, William James, John Ruskin; he discovered Walt Whitman, with whom he would later often be compared, and compare himself. He was put up for but did not pass the examinations to West Point; had he been accepted, he would have been in the same class there as Douglas MacArthur.

Midwestern culture in the days of Sandburg's youth and early manhood was largely an oratorical culture, the culture of the Chautauqua movement and of the visiting lecturer. William Jennings Bryan, a powerful speaker, was one of young Sandburg's early political heroes. Elbert Hubbard, advertising man, publisher, vaudeville performer, spellbinding lecturer, and author of the immensely best-selling pamphlet *A Message to García*, was another great figure for Sandburg. Politics and culture, being so closely connected with oratory, were both intertwined with salesmanship. In his own day, Sandburg did a bit of it all: he sold stereoscopic machines, he told Swedish jokes on the stage, he worked in an advertising agency, he gave lectures for fees. During a period when he was selling stereoscopic machines, hawking his poems, and trying to set up lectures, he called himself a "hustler." My sense is that, in good part, a hustler he always remained—and a quite brilliant hustler, too.

Was it Cromwell of whom it was said that he was "wily for the public good"? One might say of Sandburg, in something of the reverse spirit, that he was an idealist who was always in business for himself. When in his early twenties he became an organizer for the Socialist party in Wisconsin—he was allowed to keep, as wages, the dues of the new members he brought into the party—he viewed his work as in part an excellent way to perfect his performance as a lecturer. Miss Niven prints a 1906 photograph that Sandburg sent out to prospective customers for his lectures: it is very carefully posed to make him seem dark and dramatic. He was always his own best publicity agent. He did a set lecture on Walt Whitman as a brother to the great prophets and teachers, an American dreamer, interested in human betterment. One generally does well to beware those who are always exalting dreamers; they are themselves usually awake at all times to the main chance.

As a young man, Sandburg bounced around a good bit in the Socialist party, not only organizing but writing and editing for the socialist press. It was through this work that, at party headquarters in Milwaukee, he met Lillian Steichen, who was to be his wife. Later Sandburg, in a bit of (unconscious?) egotism, said of their meeting that he had been looking for "the kind of woman I would be if I were a woman." She had gone to the nascent University of Chicago, was on a health-food diet, and when they married she agreed to wear a wedding ring only as a "concession to bourgeois morals" and to "satisfy the prejudices of the proletariat." They asked the minister to omit the word "obey" from their vows. She called him Carl, he called her Paula: they were a proto-hippie couple, and if Birkenstock sandals had been invented, they would no doubt have worn them.

Paula Sandburg laid the flattery on her husband with a forklift. It was she who first noted that the socialist movement would "need its Poet," she who first called him "the People's Poet." She once wrote to him: "You are a *Man*! You are all the separate intensities of Shelley— . . .

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Walt Whitman—Marx—Wagner—the Vikings—Christ—Buddha—Lincoln—Heine—Browning—You are all these separate and different intensities. But *harmonized!*" She kept this stuff up his life long. Harry Golden, in his panegyrical book on Sandburg, tells of the woman tourist who impulsively kissed the eighty-year-old poet and to whom Paula said: "That's all right, he belongs to the world."

Paula Steichen was the sister of Edward Steichen, one of the key figures of modern photography, and in him Sandburg might be said to have gotten the brother-in-law he deserved. Each man seemed to go at things at a Himalayan level of generality. Sandburg's favorite book of his own poems is entitled *The People, Yes*, and Steichen's most famous book of photographs (to which Sandburg supplied the text), a worldwide best-seller in its day, is entitled *The Family of Man*. Sandburg wrote a book about Steichen, Steichen frequently (and in rather pompous poses) photographed Sandburg. Each seemed to be regularly calling the other a genius. "He throws a long shadow and ranks close to Ben Franklin and Leonardo da Vinci when it comes to versatility," said Sandburg of Steichen. "On the day that God made Carl," Steichen said at a dinner marking Sandburg's seventy-fifth birthday, "He didn't do anything else that day but sit around and feel good." As Sandburg lived on a fairly steady diet of exaggerated praise of this kind, it is small wonder that he was extremely touchy about criticism.

But to return to Sandburg's youth: while moving from job to job—he turned out advertising copy for a Milwaukee department store, served as secretary to the socialist mayor of Milwaukee, lectured for the Wisconsin Anti-Tuberculosis Association, did journalism for newspapers and business and trade magazines in Chicago—he also wrote poems. He was a free-verse man—one of those fellows, as Robert Frost famously put it, who prefer to play tennis without a net—and his poems met with uneven success when he sent them around to editors. Sandburg's great breakthrough came in 1914, when Harriet Monroe accepted nine poems for *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse*; she ran them as the lead item in her March 1914 issue under the rubric, "Chicago Poems."

Acceptance at *Poetry* was the making of Sandburg. It not only put him in the company of William Butler Yeats, Robert Frost, D.H. Lawrence, Hart Crane, and Edward Arlington Robinson, all of whom published in *Poetry* that year, but gave him a new status as an artist, both in the world and in his own eyes. Culture was the key that unlocked many doors in Chicago. Better yet, his poems represented avant-garde culture: they were criticized in genteel quarters for what was thought to be their brutality. Sandburg, suddenly, became the eponymous leader of something that would be known as "the hog butcher school of poetry." A better debut could not have been imagined.

That Sandburg was now seen—and, through *Poetry*, authenticated—as an artist gave him special cachet even in the hard-boiled world of Chicago journalism. He was fortunate in having landed a job on the Chicago *Daily News*, where he had been recommended to the managing editor, an extraordinary man named Henry Justin Smith, by Ben Hecht, the novelist and short-story writer who was himself then working at the paper. Sandburg "is a man who can write poetry like Whitman," Hecht told the editor. In our day this might get you fired from the New York *Times*, but Henry Justin Smith, according to Hecht, "saw the paper as a daily novel written by a school of 'Balzacs,' but we were missing a poet." Sandburg was not only hired but treated with the highest regard.

A job on the *Daily News* also put Sandburg smack-dab in the middle of what became known as the Chicago Renaissance, that gathering of writers, journalists, and artists which enjoyed a brief efflorescence during the second decade of the century, when H.L. Mencken called Chicago "the literary capital of the United States." More lunching than writing got done, as Ben Hecht noted in his autobiography, and there was much in the way of hijinks at local clubs and restaurants. But Sandburg's reputation benefited from the general *réclame* of the putative literary renaissance in Chicago. His poem "Chicago," which set clichés about the city in stone for future decades, came as close to an anthem as the Chicago Renaissance ever had.

Sandburg was by this time a family man, commuting from and to his suburban home. He and Paula had three daughters. The eldest suffered from epilepsy; the second had been slightly brain-damaged by an automobile accident; the third, Helga, who became a novelist, would later rebel against her father. Sandburg would claim, with justice, that he needed a good deal of money to take care of his first two daughters, who never left the household and who would have to be looked after all their lives. He turned out to be a powerful money earner, not least through lecturing and poetry readings. In time, he added folk-singing to his performances.

Meanwhile, Sandburg's literary reputation continued to grow. He was regularly praised as a poet whose work was vital, brash, "vivid" (as Louis Untermeyer put it in a review in the *Masses*) "with the health of vulgarity." Mencken approved him. Important novelists such as Theodore Dreiser and Sinclair Lewis were also lined up in Sandburg's camp. In time, the photographer Alfred Stieglitz, the painter Georgia O'Keeffe, and the architect Frank Lloyd Wright would weigh in with praise. He was invited to write poems to order for Thanksgiving and for Christmas—and accepted. He was making the transition from writer to performer.

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Miss Niven says that Sandburg found "his subject in poetry at last, and through this burning subject, his voice"; she also tells us that "Sandburg was growing toward a poetry as unorthodox and independent as his politics." Perhaps this is the place to say that Sandburg's poetry was not very unorthodox, and his politics not all that independent. Both were essentially sentimental. In his politics, Sandburg was for the People: the little man, the worker, the downtrodden, the ground-down. He was never a Communist, nor was he, like so many American socialists, against American entry into World War I or II. Honorable enough; but when his sentimental political views got into his poetry—and they were the very subject of his poetry—problems inevitably resulted.

In his poetry, as in his politics, he did not have a mind that much liked to go into things. He was always satisfied to stop at the middle distance. "He works in a large, loose medium," the poet Conrad Aiken once wrote, "inextricably mixing the vivid with the false." Sandburg had no real appetite for complexity. He never went very deep—no deeper, really, than the folk songs he sang and eventually anthologized in a best-selling collection he called *The American Songbag*. When his book-length poem, *The People, Yes*, came out in 1936, Robert Frost objected: "Sandburg is wrong, I say: The People, *Yes*, and *No*!"

Sandburg's reputation, then, did not grow anywhere near so steadily among serious poets and critics as it did in popular circles. Ezra Pound, the Diaghilev of the modern movement in poetry, invited Sandburg to contribute to an anthology, but also said he was not "sure whether your 'Chicago' wouldn't hit harder if it began six lines later and ended five lines sooner." Still, he granted Sandburg his place. Among other American poets, although Archibald MacLeish continued to think well of Sandburg's verse, Frost once remarked that Sandburg's was the only poetry he knew that figured to gain by translation. When the New Criticism came into prominence in the 1940's, Sandburg's prestige dropped further. His rolling rhythms and his garrulity could not hold up under the sort of intense scrutiny practiced by the New Critics.

Read today, Sandburg's poems reveal a dismal sameness. They exhibit mastery over a faded slang, the idiom of a day now done; rhythmically, they still have richness of a kind, which allows them to roll on and on, but with a feeling of uniform thinness. Gertrude Stein once said of the novelist Glenway Wescott that his writing has "a certain syrup but it does not pour"; Sandburg's poetry pours and pours but has hardly any syrup whatsoever. "O prairie mother, I am one of your boys," runs a line in *Cornhuskers*. Clichés run through his verse like calories through cheesecake: see, for instance, "White Ash," a poem about a lonely hooker with a heart of gold. The note of political optimism goes off, gong-like, in several poems: "Man will yet win/Brother may yet line up with brother." Reading Sandburg's poems, one begins better to understand what Valéry meant when he said that "the optimist is always a bad writer."

Reviewing Sandburg's *Collected Poems* in the September 1951 issue of *Poetry*, William Carlos Williams wrote: "In this massive book covering a period of close to 40 years the poems show no development in the thought, in the technical handling of the material, in the knowledge of the forms, the art of treating the line." Williams said of "Chicago" that Sandburg's "first brilliantly successful poem should have been his last." And he closed: "*The Collected Poems* make a dune-like mass; no matter where you dig into them it is sand."

BY THE time Williams wrote that review, Sandburg was well out of—well above—the poetry wars. He had long before then acquired the status of a national treasure. (His editor, upon the publication of *The People, Yes*, told him that the people "damned near owe you a national holiday.") He was, most famously, the author of a huge biography of Lincoln, a work which had proved an enormous commercial success. "The poets have always understood Lincoln," wrote the historian Henry Steele Commager, "from Whitman to Emerson to Lindsay and Benét, and it is fitting that from the pen of a poet has come the greatest of all Lincoln biographies. One of the great biographies of our literature."

Sandburg's monumental portrait of Lincoln—it runs to more than 4,500 pages and eventually appeared in six volumes—was, from the standpoint of his reputation, a beautiful stroke. The great prairie poet writing the life of the great prairie politician—it was a match made, if not in heaven, then in a publicity office. There were, to be sure, critics. According to Edmund Wilson, in reading it "there are moments when one is tempted to feel that the cruelest thing that has happened to Lincoln since he was shot by Booth has been to fall into the hands of Carl Sandburg." But the effect of the biography on Sandburg's career was to connect him with Lincoln in a way that made him seem not only the repository of all Lincolnesque wisdom but the keeper of the Lincoln flame and chief representative of the tradition of our greatest American. As Sandburg poeticized Lincoln, so this biography seemed, in the public mind, to have Lincolnized Carl Sandburg.

I have not read the six-volume *Abraham Lincoln*, but even in the one-volume edition, which I have read, the work seems to sprawl. It has the characteristic thinness that goes along with Sandburg's penchant for viewing everything at a distance, for making everything he writes about seem legendary, almost mythical. He was more omniscient than even an omniscient narrator is permitted to be. The feeling of falseness that results is not tempered by the heavily empurpled prose:

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> He [the young Lincoln] was growing as inevitably as summer corn in Illinois loam. Leaning against the doorpost of a store to which few customers came he was growing, in silence, as corn grows.

Of Lincoln's courtship of Ann Rutledge:

> They were both young, with hope endless, and it could have been he had moments when the sky was to him a sheaf of blue dreams and the rise of the blood-gold red of a full moon in the evening was almost too much to live, see, and remember.

Sandburg developed a style that seems to call for slides to accompany it.

By the time Sandburg finished his Lincoln biography he was receiving between 200 and 400 fan letters a week, which he answered by using variants of thirteen different, rather folksy, form letters. He had more invitations for speaking engagements than he could hope to handle, yet he continued to accept a great many of them. Once, he needed these speaking engagements to keep his family afloat financially. "Without the platform work, of which the guitar and songs are a part," he told the critic Malcolm Cowley, who teased him about appearing before a Junior League audience, "I could not get by for a living while doing the sort of long-time books I am on." Yet as the People's Poet, Lincoln's Boswell, guru, general sage, and television personality, Sandburg also evidently derived genuine pleasure from his public appearances.

They were extraordinary performances. His was, as we nowadays say, a tight act. I caught it one night in the mid-1950's at the University of Illinois, where Sandburg easily filled the school's largest hall. Powerful applause greeted his appearance, thunderous applause his closing. One sensed that one was watching both a historical personage and a performer who was a pro. Sandburg wore a plain black suit and a string tie (if memory serves), and his face—high cheekbones, deep-set eyes—looked sufficiently historical to have come off the carving on the side of a mountain.

Sandburg began by reading a number of poems, offering brief commentaries upon each. He let fly short, haiku-like apothegms of a populist kind. I seem to remember his incanting the line, "Politics is an ass upon which no man has ever rode." And then he picked up his guitar and out came "John Henry" and other brass oldies. When he was done, there could not have been an unsatisfied customer in the house.

The magic was in the voice. Years before that night in Champaign-Urbana, Ben Hecht remembered: "It was a voice of pauses and undercurrents, with a hint of anger always in it, and a lilt of defiance in its quiet tones. It was a voice that made words sound fresh, and clothed the simplest of sentences with mysteries." That voice had become oiled and under even better control over the years. Sandburg worked his audience consummately.

Then there was his hair. Writers with a taste for cliché were not above referring to Sandburg as "the silver-thatched poet." Lank and clean and white, Sandburg's hair was easily the most impressive of his props. Robert Frost once remarked in a letter to a friend that Sandburg "was possibly hours in town and he spent one of those washing his white hair and toughening his expression for his public performance." Another time, Frost reportedly told someone that Sandburg was upstairs fixing his hair, "trying to get it in his eyes." I am reminded of the story of the journalist who was exasperated with Brendan Bracken, Churchill's minister of information. One day he told Bracken off: "Nothing about you is to be believed, nothing is as it seems. Even your hair, which looks so false—it turns out to be real."

What, Sandburg was once asked, was it like to be famous? "It's like a communicable disease," he replied, "nothing can be done about it." Certainly he himself did nothing about it, except to soak it up for what it was worth. Even the uncritical Miss Niven concedes:

> During the last decade of his life, [Sandburg] was a full-time celebrity, and only a part-time writer. Many people clamored for his attention, sought to superimpose his venerable image on television shows, advertisements, causes, prefaces to books, public occasions, motion pictures. His life was a public circus of entertainment and pilgrimages. . . .

The sententious garrulity that was always part of Sandburg's writing grew worse with age. When his verse came under attack by critics and fellow poets, the People's Poet looked to the people for self-justification. Modern poets, he averred, the sort of poets vaunted by his enemies the New Critics, were anti-democratic, writing not for the people but for each other. "I say to hell with the new poetry," was his view at seventy-five. Poets today "don't want poetry to say what it means. They have symbols and abstractions and a code amongst themselves—sometimes I think it's a series of ear wigglings." His own poetry, he concluded, because it had a wider audience, must have been better.

Sandburg died at the age of eighty-nine, wealthy, revered, easily the most famous living poet in America, and soon to be almost entirely, if not quite forgotten, unread. He had had a tremendous roll of the dice. Now his work is quite as inert as he. As a young man, in 1909, in a column for the Milwaukee *Journal*, Sandburg unconsciously wrote his own epitaph: "America has many businessmen but no poets. The reason for this is that we are a nation of hustlers and no poet can be a hustler." Funny, the things a man, over a long life, can forget.

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A Purim Homily

Ruth R. Wisse

With one exception, all Jewish holidays relate to the land of Israel, to ancient festivals, Temple rites, and local victories. That exception is Purim, the special holiday of Jews of the Diaspora, which is celebrated one month before Passover. And while Passover has eclipsed Purim in the popular imagination, there is a sense in which the deliverance commemorated by Purim is the more miraculous of the two.

According to the Book of Esther, the Jews of the Persian city of Shushan (Susa) were saved from Haman's plot to kill them through the wile and courage of Mordecai, a Jew who "sat at the palace gate," and his niece Esther, King Ahasuerus's recent replacement for his deposed queen. When Mordecai learned that Haman, the king's chief counselor, planned to exterminate all the Jews of the realm, he pressed Queen Esther into the service of their people, and together they turned the tables on their enemy. In the end, Haman and his sons were hanged on the gallows they had erected for Mordecai, the Jews destroyed those who had been waiting to take over their properties, and the day that was to have marked their execution was transformed from a fast of mourning into a feast of rejoicing.

Small wonder that Purim became, in later Jewish history, the inebriated holiday of a sober people, a day of inversions and uncharacteristically raucous celebration. The custom, instituted in Europe, of mounting Purim plays gave grown men leave to cavort like children; community wits were appointed rabbis for the day, to mock the synagogue service and its leaders. During the traditional Purim reading of the Scroll (*megillah*) of Esther in the synagogue, the congregation raises a hellish din at every mention of the name Haman; some Orthodox synagogues annually install green and red lights to try to control the cacophony. On Purim, one gets the impression that Jewish sanity and discipline hang by a hair.

Purim is the zaniest holiday of the Jewish calendar because it celebrates the most improbable event in Jewish history—the political victory of the Jews over their self-proclaimed foes. Until the modern period, Jews were so intimately attached to this holiday that whenever families or communities felt they had been similarly spared from destruction, they would institute a Purim-like celebration—complete with special prayers and a special feast—on the anniversary of their rescue.

In the modern period, however, the holiday became politically incorrect, and the forthright satisfaction it takes in the destruction of the enemy became such an acute embarrassment that some Reform congregations banished it from the calendar.

And what about today? Can we really imagine Jews highly placed in government or Jewish "beautiful people" risking their careers, let alone their lives, to plead the cause of the Jews? If a contemporary Mordecai were to gain an edge in the inner circles of government, can one imagine him going about gathering data on the Arab war against Israel—today's equivalent of Haman—and feeding it to the head of his government so as to save his fellow Jews from harm? There are four Jews centrally involved in the making of policy toward Israel in the administration of George Bush—Dennis Ross, Aaron David Miller, Richard Haass, and Daniel Kurtzer, known to some as the Four Jewish Horsemen of the Apocalypse. Is *this* what they have been doing on behalf of the threatened Jewish polity of today?

And Esther? Would a contemporary Jewish woman in so high a position risk everything for the sake of her people? Would she bargain away her "goals" of personal self-fulfillment to help save the Jews from destruction? The more one thinks about it, the more one realizes that although the Book of Esther does not contain the name of God, it may indeed commemorate the most miraculous Jewish event of all.

One of the best known and most controversial teachings related to Purim is that of the talmudic sage Rava (Tractate Megillah 7b): a man is obliged to drink so much wine on Purim that he no longer knows whether he is cursing Haman or blessing Mordecai. The Israeli term for the Purim carnival—*Adloyadah*—means, "until he no longer knows," and is taken from this teaching. Like the author of the Book of Esther, the rabbis of the Talmud considered the moral distance between Haman and Mordecai so great that blurring their names became a way of representing true drunkenness, the temporary suspension of judgment in absolute revelry.

Modern Jews do not celebrate Purim to this degree, and for an obvious reason: more and more of them, especially in high places, are unable to distinguish between cursing Haman and blessing Mordecai even when they are stone sober.

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The Pansophist

REVOLUTION FROM WITHIN: A BOOK OF SELF-ESTEEM. By GLORIA STEINEM. *Little, Brown. 377 pp. $22.95.*

Reviewed by JOSEPH ADELSON

AS EVERYONE must know by now, this book recounts Gloria Steinem's search for self-esteem, the lessons she learned from that exercise, and her decision to inflict the resulting wisdom on an all-too-willing public. It has been a sensation, jumping immediately to the head of the best-seller lists, there joining several other meretricious women's books, though topping all of them in pretentiousness. The book has also provoked considerable speculation about its meaning for the future of feminism. Is Steinem's turn to "inwardness" a sign of regression? Or does it represent a new and more progressive phase of the movement? *Time* worried this question endlessly in a cover story featuring Steinem's book and Susan Faludi's *Backlash*. It was agreed that women were indeed turning against feminism, but ought not to be held responsible, since they were victims of an "insidious" campaign to discredit the movement.

That explanation itself should tell us that there has not really been much of a shift. Despite all the chatter about looking within, somebody out there is always at fault. *They* are doing it to *us*. A woman seeing this book on my desk asked whether it was true that "Gloria" had sold out "the movement." Have no fear, I replied, the old externalizing mentality is still there, powerful as ever. What is new is some of the jargon, above all the vocabulary of self-esteem. It is everywhere and everything, a universal elixir, the philosopher's stone, a mantra, cause-and-effect, chicken-and-egg, alpha-and-omega, self-esteem *über alles*, self-esteem forever.

In a mind-boggling first chapter, Steinem sets out to show us that problems of self-esteem both permeate and dominate all human activities, including the fate of nations. Barbados is more prosperous than Haiti; self-esteem is both the cause and the effect. Australia is in better shape than Argentina; ditto. Actually, she has caught sight of something here. Economists, she writes, believe that self-esteem plays an important role in national prosperity: true, if by that she means that economic destiny is not solely a function of social and economic realities, that national character and will and values and traditions play a substantial role. But in Steinem's hands these disparate concepts and others are *reduced* to self-esteem, which for her is not a concept at all but a badge of merit to be affixed on people and movements and nations and events and attitudes and anything else she finds pleasing.

In short, anyone expecting coherent discourse may find much of this book unreadable. It rambles from topic to topic, a mishmash of pseudo-profundities, dubious information, and half-baked opinions. To take one example among many, Steinem reports a study showing that at the outset of schooling 80 percent of children have high self-esteem, by the fifth grade the figure is down to 20 percent, and at the end of high school it has fallen to 5 percent. Ergo, "schools cause self-esteem to plunge for almost everyone." Ergo, "we need to unlearn some of our respect for education since it has undermined our respect for ourselves."

Astounded, one jumps immediately to the back of the book for the citation, only to find a reference to someone quoted in a newspaper story. Let that go. It takes only a millisecond more to recognize that however "self-esteem" was defined for the purposes of this study, it could not have been the same measure or the same variable at ages six, ten, and eighteen. In any case, the findings are unique—there is nothing remotely like them in the psychological literature. And, whatever the purported drop in self-esteem may or may not signify, why should *schooling* be singled out as the source of it? Conversely, if school is in fact so destructive, should we not abolish it, and do without? Steinem would no doubt draw back from such a conclusion, and propose instead that we transform our schools so that they nourish self-esteem. But that is exactly what we do now, to disastrous effect. Our students, who lag the world in learning, lead in self-esteem.

As for Gloria Steinem, whatever damage was done to *her* self-esteem in the grades, she has now fully recovered. She is a pansophist, she knows everything, and she is eager to share it all with us. We are instructed here in such matters as craniology, sociobiology, psychological testing, and brain biochemistry. A child of the smug social environmentalism of the 60's and 70's, she cannot quite adjust to the uneasy recognition that she may be behind the curve, that biology and genetics may destroy the dream of perfect equality. So she patronizes Edward O. Wilson, one of the great scientists of our century; criticizes all unpleasant scientific evidence as biased; and ignores the rest. In her final chapter—another mind-boggler—she reveals herself as a direct ideological descendant of William Godwin, the late-18th-century anarchist (husband of Mary Wollstonecraft, father of Mary Shelley) who believed that the perfected mind could achieve literal immortality. Steinem may not be quite all the way there yet, but she is not far behind, arguing that it will soon be possible, by psychological and technical means, to produce radical changes in physiology and personality, including—you guessed it—alternating states of male and female identity.

BUT I ought not give the impression that this book is mostly

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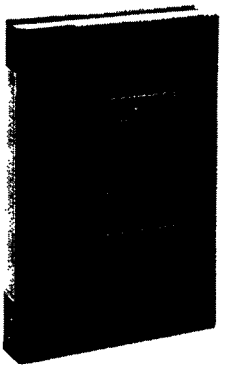

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"about" science or social science. Most of it is devoted to psychological evangelism, nostrums through which we can transform ourselves. The advice ranges from keeping a bedside log to finding just the right self-help group. Two appendices offer a Meditation Guide, and a long list of politically-correct self-help books. We are advised to love nature and to learn from the animals. There is a long discussion of love versus romance, and a chapter on spirituality.

The homilies which fill the book are supplemented by profiles of admirable souls, those who have changed themselves or their worlds by rediscovering the hidden self. Most are unknowns, but among the public figures there is an adoring treatment of Gandhi. It is a pious, feminist account of the man, showing how he gave up a false self and found the true. We hear nothing here about how—as Richard Grenier has pointed out—this friend to women allowed his wife to die rather than let her be treated with the "alien" penicillin (though he accepted Western medicine himself), or about his sleeping with naked teenage girls, or exchanging enemas with them. Nor (leaving these curiosities aside) are we told that Gandhi, like many charismatic politicians, could be vain, callous, selfish, indifferent to others, even cruel. If it is troubling that someone writing about Gandhi could be unaware of these facts about him, even more troubling is the thought that the someone could not deal with them even if aware.

WHILE struggling through this at times unbearable book I was nagged by a feeling of familiarity. Perhaps it was the tone, perhaps the voice. Then the answer came—Gloria Steinem is today's Verena Tarrant, the protagonist of Henry James's *The Bostonians*. A feminist preacher who draws large, enraptured audiences as she travels through the country, Verena Tarrant enchants her listeners by the very simplicity of her doctrine. To Basil Ransom, the infatuated Southern conservative who will ultimately capture her, her message is inane, "full of school-girl phrases, of patches of remembered eloquence, of childish lapses of logic." It is "vague, thin, rambling, a tissue of generalities." He reaches this conclusion after one of Verena's speeches:

> From any serious point of view it was neither worth answering nor worth considering, and Basil Ransom made his reflections on the crazy character of the age in which a performance as that was treated as an intellectual effort, a contribution to a question.

This verdict may serve as our own on Gloria Steinem's book.

Another Country

BENEVOLENCE AND BETRAYAL: FIVE ITALIAN JEWISH FAMILIES UNDER FASCISM. By ALEXANDER STILLE. *Summit Books. 365 pp. $25.00.*

Reviewed by EDWARD ALEXANDER

> They were always hopeful. They used to say: "But the pope . . . the Vatican . . . open city." Here they wouldn't dare touch anyone.
>
> Supported by that high sense of civilization that comes from having grown up in our beautiful Italy, mother of morality and law that from eternal Rome has illuminated the whole world, they refused to believe that the thugs of Hitler would dare repeat the incredible barbarities they had committed in Poland, Germany, Holland, and Belgium.
>
> We were very incredulous. German refugees who had escaped into Italy would take every opportunity to warn Italian Jews about what was happening to Jews in Germany, but we always said, "What happened in Germany can never happen in Italy."

THESE are the voices of three Italian-Jewish survivors interviewed by Alexander Stille for *Benevolence and Betrayal*. And indeed, Italy's Jews had better reasons than those of other European countries, including France and England, to feel safe in their native land. Although Italy did not eliminate the ghetto until 1870, its Jews quickly thereafter achieved a level of acceptance unmatched in other European countries. While mobs of Frenchmen, agitated over the Dreyfus Affair, were marching through cities shouting "*Mort aux Juifs!*," Italian Jews were serving as generals and cabinet ministers, even prime ministers. Not even the advent of Fascism disturbed their complacency, for Mussolini seemed to go out of his way to mock the racial theories of the Nazis. "National pride," he insisted, "has no need of the delirium of race," and in 1934 he called Hitler "a horrible sexual degenerate, a dangerous fool."

These admirable sentiments did not prevent Italy from passing racial laws of its own in 1938-40, or from becoming, in June 1940, Germany's only real European ally in the war. Yet even in war the Italians acted in such a way as to confirm their Jewish citizens in the conviction that they belonged to a civilized national culture. Up until the German occupation of September 1943, Mussolini allowed Jewish relief organizations to receive and assist refugees. More importantly, the Italian army protected Jews in Italian-occupied territory in southern France, Yugoslavia, and Greece from deportation to Nazi death camps. (One of the tragic paradoxes of the war was that the surrender of Italy in September 1943, a triumph for the Allies, was a catastrophe for the Jews, who now found themselves, in Italy and formerly Italian-occupied territories, in the hands of the Germans.)

But the distinction between Italian Fascism and German Nazism, though real, was not sufficient to save the more than 7,000 Italian Jews who were deported to Nazi death camps or killed on Italian soil. Compared with their German allies, the Italians may have been notable for benevolence and rescue; but they also were guilty of sufficient betrayal and persecution to destroy or cripple or poison the lives of the five Jewish families whose stories are powerfully con-

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veyed by Stille. Although his book includes many moving and memorable accounts of the generosity and bravery of non-Jewish Italians, it concludes with a lengthy denunciation (by the Buchenwald survivor Franco Schönheit) of the Italian Fascists who provided German occupiers with the lists of Jewish-community members. "'Even though I returned to Italy,'" he tells Stille, "'I no longer identify myself with the country. It no longer says anything to me.'"

To NO group of Italian Jews had Italy "said" more than to those who idolized Mussolini and nearly all that he represented: "Fatherland, Faith, and Family." Out of a Jewish population of 47,000 in 1938, more than 10,000—that is, one-third of the adults—belonged to the Fascist party. Many of these, perhaps the majority, joined for practical reasons, but a still substantial number found that their Jewish patriarchalism and Piedmontese military tradition blended perfectly with Fascism. Their story is embodied in the career of Ettore Ovazza and his family, the first and the most compelling, tragic, and terrifying episode in Stille's book.

A hero of World War I and an active Fascist, Ovazza saw no contradiction between being president of the Turin Jewish community and genuflecting before Mussolini as if before a god. He wrote of his 1929 audience with Il Duce:

> On hearing my affirmation of the unshakable loyalty of Italian Jews to the Fatherland, His Excellency Mussolini looks me straight in the eye and says with a voice that penetrates straight down to my heart: "I have never doubted it." . . . Such is The Man that Providence has given to Italy.

Such oily sycophancy raises the question of whether the Italian Jews were really as free as they claimed to be. Thus, in search of a still more impressive display of undivided loyalty to the regime, Ovazza proposed to lead a squad of Jewish Fascists to burn down the Florence office of the Zionist newspaper, *Israel*. At this point, a fellow Jewish Fascist issued a fitting rebuke: "To attack other Jews in

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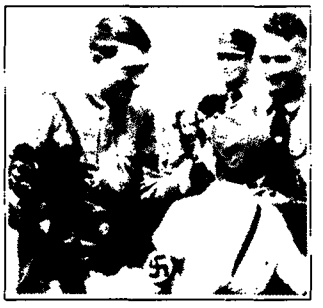

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such hard times . . . in order to ingratiate ourselves with a regime that has betrayed us [is] to act as slaves, not as free men."

Ovazza's relentless attacks on Italy's small Zionist movement seemed to afford him the protection of powerful friends even as the regime, in deference to its German ally, adopted anti-Semitic racial laws. Stille paints a vivid picture of the warm personal relations between Ovazza and Paolo Orano (rector of the University of Perugia), who in May 1937 published a book called *The Jews in Italy*, which instantly became the bible of Italian Fascist anti-Semitism and the preamble to its racial laws. When Ovazza was recovering from a calamitous automobile accident, this anti-Semitic ideologue inquired after his health every day.

In the end, to be sure, Ovazza's great services to Fascism availed him nothing. His pleas for continued recognition as a privileged Jew were ignored by the Italian bureaucracy; he was betrayed by fellow Italians to the SS; at the conclusion of Yom Kippur in October 1943, he, his wife, and his daughter were summarily shot in the back of the neck by the Germans, who then burned them in a furnace.

ALTHOUGH the tragic irony of the Ovazza story is not equaled by those that follow, the respect and even affection that Stille bestow upon this self-deceived figure sets the tone for the whole book. The only Jews who remain outside the range of his imaginative sympathy are the outright spies, traitors, and informers, such as Pitigrilli (the pen name of Dino Segre, a half-Jew and a writer of salacious and cynical fiction) and Celeste Di Porto ("*La Pantera nera*," or Black Panther), who turned in 50 of her fellow Jews of the Rome ghetto to the Germans; both converted to Catholicism after the war.

Pitigrilli figures prominently in Stille's second story, about the Foa family of Turin and the activities of the anti-Fascist (and, after 1933, largely Jewish) organization, *Giustizia e Libertà*. The interest of the Foa story arises partly from Stille's depiction of wartime underground activities, but partly from the question his account raises of what was Jewish about these Jewish anti-Fascists.

On the one hand, they themselves would ostentatiously affect detachment "from anything smelling of Judaism." But on the other hand, they would conceive their anti-Fascist schemes in study groups meeting on Friday nights and called *Oneg Sciabbath* ("Sabbath Pleasure"). Describing the Foa family Passover seder, Stille remarks that "for these highly integrated, completely Italian citizens, the verses read at Passover . . . seemed a quaint and infinitely distant legend of long-forgotten troubles." It is hard to believe that they were really so obtuse about the resonances of the Festival of Freedom as Stille here suggests. But be that as it may, Vittorio Foa, serving a fifteen-year prison sentence after Pitigrilli betrayed him, wrote as follows to his pregnant sister to allay her doubts about the wisdom of bringing a Jewish child into the Europe of 1937:

> These deterministic ideas lose all meaning in the face of our Jewish family life, which in its unifying and cohesive force survives every assimilation and, against rational argument, continues to see in each new child the blessing of the Lord. If a shadow of doubt had overcome them, in the centuries of infinite suffering, how would they have survived?

Thus did an ostensibly anti-Jewish secularist demonstrate his understanding that there are innumerable sacrednesses in what people call "secularity," and that the Jews continue to be a community of faith.

AFTER recounting the main events in the rise of Fascism and Jewish anti-Fascism in his first two stories, Stille turns in the third to the great roundup in the Rome ghetto of October 16, 1943, which ravaged the Di Veroli family among many others. These shopkeepers, salesclerks, and peddlers had been left relatively unscathed by the 1938 racial laws that devastated the Jewish professional classes; *their* doom came with the wave of anti-Semitism that followed Italy's entry into the war in June 1940. Perhaps more than other Italian Jews, those of Rome were lulled by the illusion that they would be safe. Had they not lived in this city for 2,000 years?

The book's fourth section begins two weeks after the Rome deportations, with the Jews of Genoa preparing for the Germans' next move. Stille's emphasis here is on the cooperation between the Jewish community and the local Catholic Church in hiding and rescuing Jews. In particular he describes the work of DELASEM, *Delegazione Assistenza Emigranti Ebrei* (Committee to Assist Jewish Refugees), and his story confutes the widespread image of Jewish passivity before the Nazi predators. "In places where Jews had the freedom to organize and help themselves, they did so," notes Stille. The key figures here are Massimo Teglio, a Jewish aviator of astonishing ingenuity, bravery, bravado, and humor; Rabbi Riccardo Pacifici, the chief rabbi of Genoa, who would not go into hiding or forsake his duty to the refugees because "with the Torah under my arm, I can go safely anywhere"; and Don Repetto, a Catholic priest who courageously took over the work of DELASEM after the armistice of 1943.

Nowhere is the truism that generalizations about groups tell us nothing about individuals more memorably illustrated than in this chapter. The devotion and love of the Mother Superior of the convent in which the rabbi's wife Wanda took refuge permeate her account, transcribed here, of the Germans' invasion of the sanctuary and capture of their Jewish prey:

> We gave each one the most affectionate sisterly embrace possible; it was a scene to make the stones cry, but those hearts hardened by hatred seemed to feel no pain. . . . Just and Merciful God, have pity on Your chosen people.

THE book's fifth narrative commences in November 1943 and describes the final deportations from Italy and the fate of the Schönheit family in Buchenwald and Ravensbrück. Apart from Rabbi Pacifici, the Schönheits of Fer-

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rara are the most religious Jews in Stille's book; and as irony would have it, they were precisely the ones exempted from death by the Germans. Instead, father and son spent eight-and-a-half months at Buchenwald, when conditions there were at their worst. The story of how they survived only because they had each other provides a striking counterpoint to the famous account by Elie Wiesel in *Night* of relations between fathers and sons in Auschwitz. Upon their liberation in 1945, Carlo, who had been the cantor of Ferrara's synagogue, recited Kaddish at the camp's crematorium.

In his epilogue Stille briefly recounts what has happened to the remnant of each family since the war's end. The most telling and distressing segment of this coda concerns Rabbi Pacifici's surviving son Emanuele. His throat today is badly scarred from the removal of one of his vocal cords, and he wears a medical brace under his shirt to replace the stomach muscles destroyed by a bomb. These injuries were not, however, the work of the Germans, at whose hands he endured so much, but of an Arab terrorist who threw a bomb into a Rome synagogue in 1982, killing a small boy and wounding 40 other people. At about the same time, the plaque honoring Rabbi Pacifici in Genoa was defaced by a swastika.

Although Stille keeps a polite distance from Emanuele Pacifici's assertion that there is more anti-Semitism in Italy now than in the Fascist period, evidence of anti-Semitism is not far to seek; Stille has himself reported it in magazine articles in recent years. Demonstrations by Italian leftists against Israel's 1982 incursion into Lebanon or in favor of the *intifada* have taken place not in front of the Israeli embassy but in front of synagogues. In April 1987, the walls of the University of Bologna were adorned with posters urging "Cannibals, Bedouins, Rabbis, Out of Italy!" In November of the same year, a Catholic magazine in Brescia republished excerpts from *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, with a preface by a priest who called for continued struggle "against that minority of ultra-powerful Jews who conspire to divide the church of Christ." (As to whether it is Jewish power or Jewish powerlessness that provokes anti-Semitic hatred, one may note that the minority group which once gave Italy all those generals, cabinet ministers, and prime ministers without provoking resentment has now disappeared from Italian public life.)

The strength of this book lies not in any abstract formulations or general truths, whether about Italians, Jews, or human nature. Rather it derives from the voices of human beings, ordinary and extraordinary, as they reach us through deftly handled interviews, letters, and diaries. At its best, *Benevolence and Betrayal* confirms what Primo Levi said about the "sorrowful, cruel, and moving stories" of himself and his fellow captives at Auschwitz. There are, he reported, "hundreds of thousands of [these] stories, all different and all full of a tragic, disturbing necessity." Some of them are told here by Stille.

A Dancer's Homage

PRODIGAL SON: DANCING FOR BALANCHINE IN A WORLD OF PAIN AND MAGIC. By EDWARD VILLELLA with LARRY KAPLAN. *Simon & Schuster. 317 pp. $23.00.*

Reviewed by TERRY TEACHOUT

Anyone who believes that there are no second acts in American life should consider the story of Edward Villella, the best-known American male dancer of the 60's and 70's. Forced to stop dancing with New York City Ballet (NYCB) at the age of thirty-eight because of a hip injury, Villella has since made a new career for himself as founder and artistic director of the Miami City Ballet, widely regarded as this country's most promising regional company. And he has now written an excellent memoir named, after his most celebrated NYCB role, *Prodigal Son.*

Villella's celebrity stemmed in large part from his appearances during the 60's on such popular television programs as the *Bell Telephone Hour* and the *Ed Sullivan Show*, where his athletic style and frankly masculine stage presence dazzled a generation of TV viewers. But what gave Villella an honored place in the history of dance was not his TV stardom but rather his association with George Balanchine, New York City Ballet's founder and the greatest choreographer of the 20th century. Although *Prodigal Son* tells much of interest about Villella's life as a star, it is at its most compelling when it focuses on his uneasy relationship with Balanchine, who found him inspiring as a dancer but threatening as a person.

Balanchine's own place in dance history was firmly established long before Villella joined NYCB in 1957. Born in St. Petersburg in

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1904, Balanchine fled the Soviet Union in 1924, auditioned for Sergei Diaghilev, and promptly began to stage dances for Diaghilev's Ballets Russes. With his 1928 ballet *Apollo*, choreographed to a score by Igor Stravinsky, whose *Firebird*, *Petrushka*, and *The Rite of Spring* had already stunned Ballets Russes audiences throughout Europe, Balanchine completed the artistic revolution initiated by Diaghilev's original team of collaborators. In *Apollo*, Balanchine rethought traditional conceptions of choreographic movement and design to create a "neoclassical" dance style (directly analogous to the musical style of Stravinsky's score) in which 19th-century ballet technique was speeded up, stripped of its old-fashioned dramatic rhetoric, and given a radically new look: angular, abstract, unpredictable. Controversial at first, Balanchine's neoclassicism would in time become extremely influential.

Balanchine came to America in 1934, where he founded the School of American Ballet, for many years the chief outlet for the gospel of neoclassicism in dance. He spent the next decade and a half choreographing for Broadway and Hollywood and making now-famous "plotless" ballets like *Serenade*, *Concerto Barocco*, and *Symphony in C* for a variety of companies, many of them short-lived. Balanchine finally found a permanent home in 1948 when New York's City Center invited him to start a resident company of his own, New York City Ballet. During the 50's, most New York-based dance critics and balletomanes gradually came to regard him as the leading choreographer of his time. But this reputation was still provincial. Unlike most dance companies, NYCB rarely toured in America, although it appeared regularly in Europe, usually to great acclaim, from 1950 on. As a result, Balanchine's mature work was infrequently seen outside New York, and comparatively few of his dancers were viewed as "stars" by audiences elsewhere in America.

Edward Villella, a graduate of the School of American Ballet, joined NYCB just as Balanchine's genius was beginning to be recognized by a wider American audience. Villella's growing fame contributed to the increased renown of NYCB, as did the company's move to Lincoln Center in 1964, which brought invaluable national publicity (and TV exposure) to Balanchine and his dancers.

But Villella also had a direct effect on Balanchine himself. Balanchine made no secret of the fact that he preferred to work with women dancers: "Women are more flexible. They have more ideal body for ballet for technique, for speed, for fine technique." Villella changed that. "I was able," he writes in *Prodigal Son*,

> to dance fast, move with power, jump high, and do intricate beats. . . . The energy and attack that was essential for this kind of dancing was second nature to me, part of my temperament. And it was what Balanchine wanted: attack, speed, angularity, getting from position to position by passing through, not by landing and posing, waiting and preparing for the next step.

Starting in the early 60's, Balanchine responded to these extraordinary skills with an equally extraordinary series of ballets containing prominent male roles, including *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Bugaku*, and *Rubies*, the jazzy central panel of the 1967 triptych *Jewels*. Balanchine's colleague, Jerome Robbins, no less impressed with Villella, gave him the principal male roles in his *Watermill* and *Dances at a Gathering*. And Villella also began to appear in Balanchine's early masterpieces *Apollo* and *Prodigal Son*, immediately establishing himself as a touchstone of perfection in both. But Villella and Balanchine soon found themselves at odds, partly because Villella disapproved of the way in which Balanchine sought to exert total control over the lives of his dancers, partly because an element of sexual competition began to enter into their relationship.

George Balanchine's sexual interest in his women dancers, four of whom he married and an untold number of whom he slept with, is the stuff of dance legend. "There was always a ballerina who inspired him," Villella recalls. "He'd fall in love with her and then usually marry her. . . . Balanchine could clearly make his displeasure felt when some other dancer detracted from the chosen ballerina." Balanchine, adds Villella, kept his other dancers in line by manipulating them psychologically:

> He knew exactly whom you might have gone to lunch with two times in a row, whom you were fooling around with or planning to get involved with, whom a particular dancer was living with, or might be planning to live with.

A rebel by temperament, and unambiguously heterosexual to boot, Villella refused to pander to Balanchine's need "to control whether or not a man had a relationship with one of his women," and as a result their own relations deteriorated. "From time to time," Villella writes, "I wondered if he wasn't just a bit envious of me. After all, he had never had a successful dancing career. Onstage I was a success, and offstage I was young and attractive to women." The situation was made worse by Villella's reluctant decision to stop taking Balanchine's grueling ballet classes, which were aggravating the physical problems that eventually halted his dancing career in 1975:

> Until his dying day I don't think he ever forgave me for not praying at his altar. . . . I wanted to serve, but not to the point of destroying myself.

In *Prodigal Son*, Villella talks about his one-time mentor with impressive, sometimes painful, candor. That he was able to survive in the self-contained, emotionally draining professional environment created by Balanchine and described so vividly in *Prodigal Son* is proof of his strength of character. That he was *willing* to survive, to put up with the endless nonsense instead of quitting in disgust, is an index of his certainty that Balanchine, for all his failings as a man, was an artist of fundamental integrity:

> He was not a despot or a false god, and it wasn't just a matter of authority or ego. . . . Even when we fought, he never de-

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nied me any artistic opportunity. It was as a dancer that he loved me and as a dancer that I received his priceless legacy.

Villella's respect was not misplaced. Balanchine was not the first 20th-century choreographer to do major work, but he was the first to create a lasting body of major work, one now danced not only by his own company but by virtually every company in the world with any claim to seriousness. It is largely because of him that ballet is no longer regarded as, in W.H. Auden's words, "a very, very minor art." To call him, as many do, the Picasso or Stravinsky of ballet may be to understate the case; to compare him to Shakespeare, as Villella does, is to overstate it. But certainly Balanchine was the author of what dancers of the 21st century will regard as their true classical repertory. It is fitting that dozens of books should be written about such a man, and that Edward Villella's forthright and honest memoir should be one of the best so far.

Making Change

MONEY MISCHIEF. By MILTON FRIEDMAN. *Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. 274 pp. $19.95.*

Reviewed by KENNETH SILBER

MILTON FRIEDMAN'S latest book comes at a pivotal moment. Around the globe, monetary systems are being fundamentally restructured. The European Community is moving toward a single currency, expending considerable political capital to achieve that goal. Third-world and post-Communist governments from Argentina to Ukraine are experimenting with a diverse array of reforms.

Yet *Money Mischief*, subtitled "Episodes in Monetary History," is at least as concerned with the past as with the present. Much of the book deals with events of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. For instance, Friedman examines the Coinage Act of 1873, which placed the U.S. dollar on a gold standard and effectively denied a monetary role to silver. Analyzing the consequences of that move, he explores what might have occurred if different policies had been followed. This leads to a broader discussion of the relative virtues of monometallism, in which a currency is linked to either gold or silver, and bimetallism, in which the money is backed by both. Friedman also looks at the significance of the development, late in the last century, of a new technique for extracting gold from low-grade ore. Moving forward several decades, he speculates about the effects of the silver-purchase program initiated by the Roosevelt administration in the early 1930's.

As the book proceeds into more recent monetary history, Friedman compares Chile's establishment of a fixed exchange rate in the late 1970's with Israel's adoption of a similar policy in the mid-1980's. Drawing on a range of examples, he defends his well-known thesis that excessive monetary growth is the crucial factor underlying inflation. The final chapter offers, in broad strokes, a picture of the world's present monetary situation.

THE links between Friedman's discussion of historical events and his analysis of current developments are rather tenuous. The reader who expects to find present-day relevance in the lengthy discussion of bi- versus monometallism, for example, is bound to be disappointed; Friedman himself acknowledges that the issue is primarily of historical interest. Moreover, the pace of current monetary change is such that various late developments—the December 1991 Maastricht summit on a unified European currency, Russia's grappling with the issue of a convertible ruble, Argentina's attempt to fight inflation by linking its currency to the dollar—receive little or no discussion. *Money Mischief* is thus limited as a guide to current policy issues. But as a meditation on the twists and turns of the past, it has much to offer.

The role of chance in monetary history, and the propensity of government actions to yield unintended consequences, are themes common to many of the episodes Friedman recounts. Thus, *Money Mischief* retells the story, familiar from Friedman's earlier work, of how China was affected by the U.S. government's purchases of silver—purchases undertaken by President Franklin D. Roosevelt as a political sop to influential Senators from silver-producing states.

In Friedman's telling, the resulting boost in silver prices led to a general price deflation in China, a nation which, in the early 1930's, was the only populous country still on a silver standard. This hastened the Nationalist government's abandonment of the standard and rendered China more vulnerable to the hyperinflation that resulted from the need to finance the war against Japan and the civil war against the Communists. Friedman convincingly argues that the U.S. silver purchases contributed, at least modestly, to Chiang Kai-shek's downfall—an outcome well beyond the imagining of Roosevelt and other American politicians who wanted to "do something for silver." Indeed, insofar as Asia entered into American calculations, it was assumed that China would benefit from higher silver prices.

Friedman's comparison of Chile and Israel also emphasizes the element of unpredictability. These two nations followed essentially the same policy, that of establishing a fixed exchange rate or "pegging" the local currency to the U.S. dollar. In each case, the purpose was to curtail inflation. Yet the respective actions, taken some six years apart, had drastically different outcomes, due to circumstances well beyond the control of policy-makers in either country.

Chile had the misfortune of establishing a fixed exchange rate in 1979, just prior to the dollar's sharp appreciation against other major currencies. The Chilean peso thus rose against other currencies in tandem with the dollar, damaging the country's exports. Meanwhile, the price of copper, Chile's major export, was declining in world markets, while the price of oil, which Chile imports, was rising. The result was a deep recession, one that would have been far less severe had the peso

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been allowed to depreciate against the dollar. In 1982, the currency peg was abandoned.

By contrast, Israel's pegging of the shekel to the dollar occurred in the mid-1980's, just as the dollar was beginning to descend against major currencies. At this time, furthermore, oil prices were in decline. The fixed dollar-shekel rate was kept in place for only thirteen months (after which the shekel was pegged to a basket of currencies), but during that time, it helped bring inflation down from an annual rate of about 500 percent into the low double digits. Without causing a recession, Israel's currency peg helped create a degree of price stability that lasts to this day.

THE issue of pegged exchange rates has taken on increasing importance in the past several years. The European Monetary System (EMS) is essentially an arrangement of flexible pegs, in which national currencies are constrained in the extent to which they can fluctuate against one another. Friedman is an opponent of such currency pegs, believing they represent an unstable middle ground between floating exchange rates and unified currencies (either of which he sees as preferable). In *Money Mischief*, he takes several swipes at the EMS.

Some of this criticism is well-founded. Friedman notes, for example, that pegged exchange-rate systems often come under stress from the divergent domestic agendas of individual nations' central banks. Certainly, such strains were seen in the EMS over the past year, as European central banks were torn between their currency commitments (which required that interest rates be high enough to attract investment) and the need to stabilize domestic economies (which required lower interest rates, to spur economic growth). Friedman also has a point in questioning the extent to which the EMS can be credited with the lower inflation which member countries have enjoyed in recent years; after all, inflation has declined in many non-EMS countries as well.

In one respect, however, Friedman's skepticism toward the EMS is unconvincing. It is unrealistic, he writes, to expect a system of pegged exchange rates to lead to a unified currency. Such a prospect he describes as an "utter mirage," since it would require the elimination or integration of redundant central banks, a politically tricky endeavor. Yet with the Maastricht summit of December 1991, it has become clear that this outcome is now a realistic possibility. For better or worse, most members of the European Community have demonstrated considerable determination to establish a unified currency by the end of the decade.

The single-currency plan may be criticized on various grounds; Friedman himself wrote an op-ed piece in the *Wall Street Journal* shortly after Maastricht, wondering whether it would not be better to let market forces, rather than government policy, establish an eventual unified currency. But *Money Mischief*'s casual dismissal of European monetary union as far-fetched is now out of date.

The next several years will be a fascinating time for observers of monetary systems. There is much to be learned, not only from the European project but also from smaller-scale monetary experiments around the world. One looks forward to further comments from Milton Friedman.

War Diary

THE DE-VALUING OF AMERICA: THE FIGHT FOR OUR CULTURE AND OUR CHILDREN. By WILLIAM J. BENNETT. *Summit Books. 271 pp. $20.00.*

Reviewed by RITA KRAMER

IF IT is true that you can judge a man by his enemies, William J. Bennett's credentials are impressive indeed. As this summing-up of his career and positions reminds us, in a little less than a decade in public life he managed to offend almost everyone worth offending. As chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) in the first term of the Reagan administration, he outraged liberal academics and Left-leaning media figures. As Secretary of Education in Reagan's second term, he went on to incur the wrath of the various politically-correct special-interest groups. And as director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy under George Bush he took on those in Congress, the "helping professions," and the press who might have missed out on earlier opportunities for Bennett-bashing.

This book is Bennett's war diary, consisting of dispatches from the front in the struggle between, on the one hand, the combined forces of Washington's "Beltway" culture, academia, and the media and, on the other hand, mainstream America and its traditional bourgeois values. Topical and episodic, the book casts a backward look over Bennett's various campaigns and reviews the stands he has taken, refuting his critics along the way. What the book is not is a sustained scholarly essay or a coherently fashioned statement of a kind one might expect from Bennett, a trained lawyer and political philosopher and one of the few figures in American public life today who can approach social and political issues from the perspective of an authentic liberal education. Yet while we are waiting for that other book, *The De-Valuing of America* can serve as an interim guide to the perplexed at a time when liberal democracy, increasingly appreciated by the rest of the world, remains relentlessly besieged by too many of those already enjoying its benefits.

As a political memoir, *The De-Valuing of America* tells us a lot about where we have been these last ten years and, sometimes surprisingly, reminds us where we started from and how far we have come. After all, when Bennett assumed his first appointed office at NEH, it was not yet widely recognized that the ideas and ideals expressed in the great works of Western civilization, and the custom and ceremony that have grown up around them, needed defending from the ideologues, whether in Hollywood or at Harvard. Those

RITA KRAMER's *most recent book is* Ed School Follies: The Miseducation of American Teachers *(Free Press).*

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were the days before such bellwether mass-market publications as *Newsweek* and even such unimpeachably liberal ones as the *New Republic* had taken off after "political correctness"; and before the formation and spread of alternative faculty organizations like the National Association of Scholars. It is useful to bear this in mind in assessing Bennett's often criticized tendency to speak out when and how he did ("shrill," "controversial," "confrontational," "a loose cannon in a bully pulpit," "an elitist," "a brawler" are some of the kinder epithets his opponents have used to characterize him).

At the NEH, Bennett's was the first clear voice to say out loud that the government was funding projects that were silly, inappropriate, or opposed to the educational aims for which the Endowment had been created. Thus, one of his earliest policy decisions was to withdraw funding from such "educational documentaries" as the unabashedly pro-Sandinista *From the Ashes . . . Nicaragua* and to maintain unequivocally that it was not the business of the government to subsidize, at taxpayer expense, blatantly one-sided anti-American propaganda. The predictable cries of "censorship . . . chilling effect . . . free speech . . . First Amendment" followed. It was the Fort Sumter of what has come to be called the culture wars.

As Secretary of Education from early 1985 to late summer 1988, Bennett prosecuted the culture wars by clashing with the National Education Association and other professional schooling organizations. He saw, and did not hesitate to say, that the vast bureaucracy called into being by legislation ostensibly intended to help schoolchildren was operating more in its own interests than in theirs. He was also one of the first to call attention to the divisiveness with which the democratic culture was being threatened by, of all things, the public school. From a place dedicated to the transmission of a common culture and of the skills necessary to understand and extend it, the public school had become an agency of social change, replacing competition with "cooperative

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■ In order to gain perspective, some thumbnail history may be in order. Large numbers of Jews have been living in these territories since biblical times – without interruption. Most of the Arabs living there are in fact relative newcomers. "Palestine" is the entire area now covered by Israel, including Judea/Samaria (the so-called "West Bank") *and* what is now the Kingdom of Jordan. It originally also included the Golan Heights, which later, in an agreement between England and France, were ceded to France, and to Syria as the successor in possession. In 1922, contrary to the requirements of the League of Nations Mandate, the British severed the entire area east of the Jordan River and gave it to the Hashemites as reward for their assistance in World War I. Thus, fully 75% of Palestine, all of which under the Mandate and under the terms of the Balfour Declaration was meant to be a homeland for the Jewish people, was lost for that purpose. Only the area west of the Jordan River was left for Jewish settlement.

■ In 1947, after decades of strife between Arabs and Jews, the British decided that they had enough and announced that they would relinquish the Mandate. The United Nations stepped in and proposed a partition plan under which the country (west of the River) was to be divided into respective Arab and Jewish areas. Jerusalem was to be an internationalized city. The Jews accepted the plan; the Arabs refused it out of hand. In 1948, on the twice truncated territory allotted to them by the United Nations, the Jews declared their independence, and the state of Israel was born. On the same day, six Arab armies invaded the new-born state. In what can be described as an almost biblical miracle, the Jews defeated the six Arab armies. When an armistice was finally secured, however, TransJordan remained in possession of Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") and the eastern part of Jerusalem; Egypt remained in possession of the Gaza Strip. TransJordan promptly renamed itself Jordan.

■ Once in possession of the "West Bank" and East Jerusalem, the Jordanians promptly proceeded to expel all Jews and systematically to desecrate and to destroy most Jewish sacred places, cemeteries and houses of worship. No Jews, regardless of whether they were Israelis, Americans or citizens of any other country, were allowed into the "West Bank" or East Jerusalem, the locale of the Western Wall, the holiest site in Judaism. In 1967, Abdel Nasser of Egypt, joined by the same array of Arab armies that had tried to destroy Israel in 1948, launched another war against Israel "to drive the Jews into the sea" and into oblivion, once and for all. The Israelis pre-empted and utterly defeated the combined Arab might in the 6-Day War, one of the greatest military victories in history. When the dust of war settled, the Israelis had not only retained their national territory, but had repossessed (not occupied) the territories of Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank"), the eastern part of Jerusalem, the Gaza Strip, the Golan Heights and the vast Sinai Peninsula.

It is clear from this abbreviated history that the Israeli claim to the "West Bank" is at least as strong as that of the Arabs. It's only by dint of constant repetition that the world has come to think of these territories as "occupied Arab land". About 100,000 Jews now live in these territories. And why shouldn't they? Why should the Arab countries and the "West Bank" be the only places in the whole wide world where Jews are not allowed to live? How can 100,000 Jews living among 700,000 Arabs be the "greatest threat to peace"? How can Secretary Baker get so exercised and consider a new settlement of a few mobile homes on some barren Judean hills as the "greatest threat to peace", when he seems to be oblivious and totally unconcerned about the unrelenting hostility of the Arab countries, the de facto incorporation of Lebanon by Syria, the Scuds and chemical weapons still remaining in Iraq, and the relentless and ominous build-up of Syria's missile forces?

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learning" and helping students "feel good about themselves" by doing away with objective measures of achievement and passing everyone along through the system. The result could not be anything but corruption of the system itself, no longer an educational enterprise but increasingly a political one, with social work taking the place of teaching and learning replaced by therapy.

As Secretary, Bennett focused on the abysmal performance of American schoolchildren. He sponsored a series of Department conferences that brought school personnel into contact with educational theorists for their mutual enlightenment, and then issued publications that made clear what worked in education and what did not. To the eternal clamor for more government money to pour into the same dysfunctional system, he answered that no amount of spending would substitute for the indispensable elements of an effective school: strong school-based leadership, high expectations, unequivocal requirements for homework as well as class work, parental involvement—and, most of all, discipline. It was a position that, not surprisingly, won him the bitter enmity of the educational establishment; it also won him the appreciation of principals and teachers and parents.

Bennett went further, talking about moral standards as well as intellectual ones, about what he called the formation of civic character. Apoplexy is a mild word for the reaction to this in the universities and the institutions that train teachers for America's classrooms, more concerned with handing out condoms than with handing on values. The last straw was his advocacy of parental choice among schools as "the linchpin of sound educational reform."

Bennett's criticisms were not limited to what might be called lower education. As Secretary he accused the universities of having abandoned their intellectual authority and of having lost sight of their educational mission and moral purpose. The usual suspects responded with the predictable comments about the irrelevance of the so-called canon based on "the ideas of great white men who are dead." He was also accused of being "religious." Bennett may not have been the first to identify what he called "the academic thought police," but he was certainly the first highly visible public official to attack "the new McCarthyism of the Left." His outspokenness had the effect (in addition to cutting down invitations to deliver commencement addresses) of encouraging others to speak out as well.

Can Bennett be said to have had a profound impact on American schools during his tenure? Perhaps not—but as his book reminds us, he used his influence to frame the terms of the discussion and to create a *climate* of change, thus setting the future direction of federal school-reform programs, including the ambitious plan for American education that has been put forward by the current Secretary, Lamar Alexander.

What effect Bennett had on the national drug scene as director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy is a harder question to answer. Again he made headlines, endorsing capital punishment for major drug dealers as "a morally proportionate response" to what drugs were doing to the young and calling drug legalization "a recipe for a public-policy disaster." Bennett quotes statistics showing a significant drop in the number of drug users in this country between 1985 and 1990, but whether we are seeing a real diminution either in the drug trade or in its wasting effects on human lives is not clear. It *is* clear that his get-tough policy of law enforcement never had enough of a chance to prove its long-run effectiveness.

Bennett is too smart and too experienced to believe that any one policy can solve complex and deep-rooted social problems. The culture as a whole, he writes, cannot be expected to improve "until we get the underlying principles right." As a thoughtful Catholic, a student of the great texts of the Western tradition, and one to whom many Americans look for leadership, he seems admirably suited to address himself to the task of setting those principles forth.

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We invested over $40 million and 18 months to develop it. And with the help of our flight attendants, chefs and passengers, we created a new concept in service for Lufthansa Business and First Class. It's designed to lavish the most individualized attention on every passenger. It offers unsurpassed comfort that can make your flight go by that much quicker. For instance, you'll have the same flight attendant from your welcome drink generally to your last snack. And in Business Class, you may need his or her suggestion on our new menus with dishes so delicious that our cuisine was admitted into the elite "Chaîne des Rôtisseurs." In First Class, our new personalized service means a real buffet breakfast. And on our 747s, a luxurious upstairs cabin redesigned exclusively for you. So in Business or First Class, you'll find our European standard of elegance at a new level—one that will show you time does fly when you're flying. The Lufthansa Intercontinental Service. A passionate beginning to a new era in flight.

A passion for perfection.℠

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For more information and reservations call 1-800-645-3880 or see your Travel Agent. Lufthansa is a participant in the mileage programs of United, Delta, and USAir.

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